

Review of grant making by the St Stephen's Green Trust

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March 2014

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Executive summary and key judgements

This is an analysis of the social situation in Ireland in early 2014, with an analysis of funding trends, with a view to recommending how the St Stephen's Green Trust should develop its future funding programme. It was undertaken through desk research and interviews with 14 trust and external informants.

The demographic context in Ireland is one of a youthful, growing population, with high in and out migration rates at the same time. In-migration continues, with new communities comprising 17% of the population. Social patterns are stable. Northern Ireland is growing at a slower rate, ageing and has a much smaller minority community (4%).

The political context in Ireland is one of continuity of policy despite a change of government. The most lasting political change is the depletion of the state's social policy infrastructure. There has been little effective challenge to the austerity policies pursued by government. Irish social policy remains a European outlier. In Northern Ireland, welcome political stability is moderated by unresolved issues arising from the conflict.

In the Republic, the economic and social crisis that began in 2008 and the austerity policies that followed have led to immiserization, an increase in poverty and inequality and in areas that concern the trust, an increase in homelessness and a disinvestment by the state in the Traveller community. Although changes have been less dramatic in Northern Ireland, its economic and social performance makes it one of the weakest regions of the UK.

An important function of this report was to test for emerging social need. In the Republic, poverty has intensified amongst those geographical communities and categories traditionally classified as poor. Fuel poverty has intensified, while new forms of poverty have emerged, notably food poverty, with the likelihood of water poverty to follow. There is an emerging new poor of those in low-income home debt, normally coupled with utility debt. Some voluntary organizations have been almost overwhelmed by the intensification of socially distressed clients coming to them. Some parts of the new communities are at especial risk, such as those in direct provision, the trafficked and the Roma community. Northern Ireland presents a less extreme picture, but with persistent fuel poverty, a rise in housing need and in-work poverty.

The review reported on funding trends affecting the voluntary and community sector. In the Republic, the government reduced its funding for the voluntary and community sector by -35%, more in the case of community development (-43%) at a time when overall government funding fell -7.1%. Employment is expected to fall -31% by end 2015. Ancillary forms of funding have dried up, notably European funding. The government has promoted philanthropic giving, but its approach has been challenged. Here, the philanthropic sector sees the exit of the two main funders (Atlantic Philanthropies and One Foundation) and a third important for social justice (Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust). Trust funding will fall over 80%, leaving one medium-size funder (Ireland Funds, €10m) and a number of small grants funds. Not only is the fall in volume important, but the type of funding they favoured (advocacy). The picture is more positive in Northern Ireland, where government funding has risen consistently, although its form has changed from grants to contracts. There is a larger trust sector, comprising indigenous and UK-wide foundations.

Funding in the trust's target areas varies. In the Republic, it is substantial in the homeless sector, moderate in the prisoner arena, but negligible for Traveller organizations. In Northern Ireland, there is funding for organizations working with the homeless, but much less for prisoner and Traveller groups.

The backdrop for the future operation of the trust is a difficult one, especially in the Republic with the prospect of 'post-austerity austerity'. Positively, though, there is high confidence in the value of small grant schemes and knowledge from Europe as to how they can be used effectively. The St Stephen's Green Trust is well regarded in Ireland as a focussed, organized, thought-out funder which has now achieved an optimum mode of working.

The views of informants were especially taken into consideration in mapping a way forward. Suggestions were made under the heading of target groups and means of operation:

- There are compelling reasons for dropping the homeless category, except for particular circumstances, but for maintaining the prisoners/ex-prisoners and Traveller categories;
- To respond to emerging social need, there is a good case to add categories in the areas of the new communities and spatial areas of distress;
- There should be a re-focus of grants around issues, policy, advocacy, ideas, leadership; with the trust leading in pre-grant assistance, evaluation, learning and dissemination.

Table of contents

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Terms of reference | 6 |
| Method and acknowledgements | 6 |
| 1 Context: demographic | 7 |
| 2 Context: political and institutional | 9 |
| 2.1 General | 9 |
| 2.2 Northern Ireland | 12 |
| 2.3 Headlines | 13 |
| 3 Context: economic and social | 14 |
| 3.1 General | 14 |
| 3.2 Particular areas of interest | 16 |
| 3.3 Northern Ireland | 19 |
| 3.4 Headlines | 21 |
| 4 Emerging social need | 22 |
| 4.1 General | 22 |
| 4.2 New poverties | 23 |
| 4.3 Minorities | 26 |
| 4.4 Northern Ireland | 27 |
| 4.5 Headlines | 29 |
| 5 Funding trends | 30 |
| 5.1 General | 30 |
| 5.2 Trends by funder | 32 |
| 5.3 Northern Ireland | 39 |
| 5.4 Areas of particular interest to the trust | 40 |
| 5.5 Headlines | 42 |

| | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| 6 | Considerations | 43 |
| 6.1 | The trust now | 43 |
| 6.2 | Broad considerations | 44 |
| 6.3 | Small grant operations | 46 |
| 6.4 | Headlines | 47 |
| 7 | Way forward | 48 |
| 7.1 | Value, impact and means of operation | 48 |
| 7.2 | Targets, focus and orientation | 49 |
| 7.3 | Recommendations | 53 |
| 7.4 | Headlines | 54 |

Tables

| | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 5.1 | Change in government funding 2008-2014 | 32 |
| 5.2 | Philanthropic trusts likely to be operating after exit | 37 |
| 7.1 | Assessment of target areas against criteria | 51 |

Terms of reference

The St Stephen's Green Trust (SSGT) has asked for a review of its grant-making, the second such review entrusted to this writer, the first having been carried out in 2006. The terms of reference set by the trust were that St Stephen's Green Trust (SSGT) wished to review the focus of its grant making to determine where it can be most effective in its grant making in the next three to five years. It asked for a scoping report to examine current and emerging social need in Ireland, particularly in the context of changing patterns of governmental and philanthropic funding, SSGT's core areas of interest and the resources at its disposal, the report to suggest a framework for the future development of SSGT in relation to its priority areas. The review was enjoined to consider:

- SSGT's interest in social justice issues, particularly as they relate to Travellers, prisoners/ex-prisoners and people who are homeless;
- The more engaged approach it has taken in the past seven years, in response to the grants review undertaken in 2006;
- The annual grants budget it has to allocate and its administrative resources.
- SSGT's focus on small grants programmes; and
- Value and usefulness of grants programmes focused on particular themes/ issues.

Although most of the grants of the trust are in the Republic, the trust is an all-Ireland organization, so proportionate attention will be given to Northern Ireland.

Method and acknowledgements

The review was carried out by desk research and by interviews with a small group of informants agreed between the writer and the trust. I would like to thank the following for their assistance with interviews and the provision of information, views and comments:

Orla O'Neill, Grants & Development Director, SSGT
 Stephen Rourke, chairperson, SSGT
 Sr Maria McGuinness, board member, SSGT
 Donal O'Brien, board member, SSGT
 Jane Leek, board member, SSGT
 Mike Drennan SJ, board member SSGT
 Noelle Spring, Katharine Howard Foundation
 Tina Roche, Community Foundation of Ireland
 Mary Higgins, CEO, Caranua
 Robin Hanan, CEO, European Anti Poverty Network Ireland
 Jordan Campbell, Ireland Funds
 Robin Wilson, independent researcher, Open Democracy
 Niall Crowley, independent researcher and writer
 Conor Hickey, CEO, Crosscare

1 Context: demographic

Ireland¹ presents a picture of a young country with vigorous demographic features, with strong population growth, 8.2% over 2006-2011, or 1.6% a year at a time when most of the 28 member states of the European Union (EU) are static or even falling.² The population has risen +30% since 1991 and in 2013 was 4.593m. The principal demographic change is the arrival of large numbers of arrivals, the new communities, which have made Ireland an ethnically and religiously diverse country in a remarkably short period, less than ten years. There has been a considerable growth in affiliation to muslim, orthodox and protestant faiths, as well as those not professing a religion. The proportion of the population born outside Ireland is 766,770, or 17%, 199 nationalities. The largest minority is Polish, 122,585 people, followed by descending numbers from Lithuania, Nigeria, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia.

Population growth is at both ends of the population pyramid: most at the bottom, but some at the top, with a growing cohort of older people as the postwar baby-boom generation retires, rising from 11% to 11.6%, but still one of the smallest in Europe. The Irish birthrate has fallen slightly since 2009, but remains on a high plateau of 15.8‰, the highest in Europe.³ The fertility rate rose in the 1990s and is now stable at the 2% mark, also the highest in Europe. Demographic growth is essentially a feature of the proportion of child-bearing age, significant numbers being from immigrant communities. The age of family formation continues to rise gradually, 32 being the average age of mother at first birth. The proportion of teenage births continues to fall and is less than 3% of all births.⁴

There are two important aspects of population flow, which are not always well understood either popularly or in the media. Ireland was and is a country of high population in-flows and out-flows *at the same time*. As economic prospects declined, significant numbers left the country again.⁵ Most were Irish-born, the proportion of returning immigrants being small. Out-migration reached 89,000 in the year to April 2013, far exceeding the previous high of 71,900 in 1989 and making Ireland the European country with the highest emigration. We will not know for some time whether this is a peak point or not. 16% of all Irish households have been affected by emigration in the past five years, rural areas the most. The 19-24 age cohort was the only one to lose population, a function of emigration. A significant proportion departed for distant destinations (44.2%).

¹ Here, the term 'Ireland' shall mean the 26cos, what are sometimes called 'the Republic' while the six northern counties shall be termed 'Northern Ireland'. Where the 32cos are referenced, then the term 'island of Ireland' shall be used.

² This and subsequent demographic information from Central Statistics Office: *Statistical yearbook of Ireland*, 2013. Dublin, Stationery Office, 2013.

³ Per mille sign (‰) (per thousand), permylead (‰‰) (per ten thousand / hundred thousand).

⁴ Edwards, Elaine: *Births to teenage girls fall 10% while average age of new mothers rises*. *Irish Times*, 15th October 2010.

⁵ Glynn, Irial; Kelly, Tomas & MacEinri, Piaras: *Irish emigration in an age of austerity*. Cork, University College Cork, 2013; Kenny, Ciara: *Ireland has highest net level of emigration in Europe, figures reveal*. *Irish Times*, 24th November 2013.

The pace of in-migration, although slowed immediately following the economic and social events of 2008, has continued. Immigration fell from a peak of 151,000 in 2007 to 41,800 in 2010 where, having bottomed out, it began to rise again (55,900 in the year to April 2013). There are three main components of inward migration: workers from other European countries, in practice principally from eastern and central Europe; workers from further afield, principally Asia; and refugees, notably from Africa (more recently Afghanistan and Syria) numerically the smallest but the most visible. In the first two categories, immigration fell to a low point in 2010, but has been rising since. The third category is the only one to see a continuous fall. Claims for asylum rose from the negligible in the early 1990s (31 in 1992) to pass the thousand mark in 1996 (1,179), peaking at 11,634 in 2002, falling back to 1,939 in 2010, 1,250 in 2011 to below the thousand mark in 2012 (950).

Social patterns are relatively stable. Marriage continues to be popular, with the marriage rate at 4.6‰. The number of divorced people is 87,770 and separated 116,263, the latter figure apparently levelling off. The Irish divorce rate is the lowest in the EU, 0.7‰. Civil partnership was introduced in 2011, the initial numbers being 536 in 2011 and 408 in 2012. The proportion of births outside marriage has risen gradually over the past eight years from 32% to 35%. About half are in cohabiting relationships and the proportion of children being reared in single parent households is lower, 18.4%: married or cohabiting households remain the national norm. The number of civil marriages is stable at around 6,000, compared to around 14,000 religious marriages. The suicide rate, historically low in Ireland, followed European norms to rise from 1970 to peak at 14‰ in 1998 and has since fallen back to 11‰.

The Northern Ireland population in 2011 was 1.81m +7.45% on the previous census figure of 2001. The Northern Ireland population is growing at a lower rate and is also ageing faster, with the proportion over 65s rising +18%. 36,300 migrated into Northern Ireland during the intercensal period, a small number compared to south of the border. The marriage rate the same, 4.6‰, but the birthrate lower, 13.9‰. The proportion of births outside marriage is significantly higher, 42%. Northern Ireland remains essentially divided into two blocks: 48% protestant and 45% catholic. The ethnic minority population of Northern Ireland is far smaller than the Republic, 4%. Inward migration peaked in 2007, mainly from the accession countries and has tailed off.

In summary, these are the demographic headlines:

- Both parts of the island have rapid population growth, concentrated on the youngest age groups. Northern Ireland is ageing sooner.
- In Ireland, there are high levels of immigration and emigration *at the same time*. 2013 marked the highest ever year of emigration. Although immigration dipped after 2008 and the number of asylum-seekers continues to trend downward, in-migration into the Republic continues to rise. Ireland is now ethnically diverse, 17% of the population. In-migration in Northern Ireland is low.
- Patterns of family life remain stable, with high rates of marriage, low rates of divorce and two-parent families with children the norm.

2 Context: political and institutional

This chapter looks at the general context (2.1), followed by Northern Ireland (2.2) and then reaches headline conclusions (2.3).

2.1 General

The political environment provides, in both parts of the island, an unusual combination of change and continuity. Starting with the Republic, the 2011 general election marked the biggest upheaval in party politics since the 1920s, with Fianna Fail falling from 78 to 20 seats, being replaced by a Fine Gael - Labour government with a huge majority.⁶ The policy of government, especially in the key area of the austerity programme, marked continuity, the government making it clear that it would honour the commitments of the previous government to bankers and lenders. The only modifications were a restoration of the minimum wage and the protection of basic social welfare payments, 'basic' being a narrowly defined range.

The principal area of change was not in policy but institutional. At an overall level, the incoming government maintained the commitment in the *Public sector reform plan* (2011) to reduce the size of the public service from 320,000 in 2008 to 282,500 by 2015, down - 37,500 or - 11.7%. The July 2008 circular SS180/20/10/0964B required departments to achieve savings in public spending of - €400m in 2008 and - €1bn in 2009 through the reduction, merger or abolition of state agencies, a list of 41 being subsequently identified. The precise rationale for this change was never fully explained, but it ranged from a combination of the need for savings to administrative coherence to political rhetoric ('bonfire the quangos'). The outcome, though, was not in question, for a substantial number of state agencies was extinguished, almost all in the social policy field: the Combat Poverty Agency, National Economic and Social Forum, Comhar, National Council for Ageing and Older People, Office for Active Citizenship, the Crisis Pregnancy Agency and Library Council. Smallness of size was no protection, for many small but valuable bodies were abolished, such as the Women's Health Council, the Irish Research Council for the Humanities, National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, National Crime Council, Education Disadvantage Committee, Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, Children Acts Advisory Board. Others had their budget sharply reduced (e.g. Equality Authority, -45%; Human Rights Commission, -35%) or were integrated into larger organizations (e.g. Homeless Agency into Dublin City Council). The overall savings from this exercise were small (€6.457m), but the outcome was a substantial reduction in the institutional capacity of the state in the social policy field.⁷

⁶ Fine Gael, 76; Labour, 37; Fianna Fail, 20; Sinn Fein, 14; United Left, 5; others 14. Current state of the parties is Fine Gael, 70; Labour 33; Fianna Fail, 20; People Before Profit, 1; Socialist Party 1; others, 27.

⁷ Crowley, Niall: *Empty promises - bringing the Equality Authority to heel*. Dublin, A&A Farmer, 2010.

By contrast, new economic agencies were created, ranging from the enormous (National Asset Management Agency (NAMA)) to the large (Uisce Eireann) and small (NewERA, Fiscal Advisory Council). Further reductions in the scope in government were achieved by the privatization of gas (Bord Gais, 2013), the part-privatization of bus routes and the prospect of water to follow. To achieve savings, the government could arguably have focussed on persistent, continuing levels of transactional corruption. The Mahon report (2012) uncovered 'endemic and systemic' levels of corruption in politics, government and business, effectively characterizing the state as a kleptocracy: Transparency International has noted the lack of progress in acting thereon.⁸ Transactional corruption continues to exact a high cost, ranging from the use of state office for party political advantage to ministerial channelling of public money into their own constituencies (e.g. lottery, primary healthcare centres, schools).⁹ It is little surprise that public trust in government in Ireland fell to the lowest in Europe, 20%, exceeded only by the banks, 6%.¹⁰

The consequences of these changes for the voluntary and community sector have generally attracted little critical analysis, but they are likely to be profound. The social policy functions of the state were sharply diminished; the infrastructure that sustained social policy in general and championed voluntary and community organizations in particular was taken out; and the state was now in the worrying position of preferring to take social policy decisions in the absence of advice rather than with its benefit. The only notable institutional reform of this period was the establishment of the Child and Family Agency, eventually established in 2014, taking responsibility for children's welfare away from the Health Service Executive (HSE), its first task being to tackle continuing deficits in the quality of care for children at risk.¹¹

Criticism of the social consequences of austerity was muted and limited in comparison to most European countries, such as Greece, where protestors had chanted the rhyme "We're not the Irish / We're the Greeks / We do not capitulate", although they too eventually yielded to the austerity régime. In the Oireachtas, opposition was stoutly expressed by Sinn Féin, small groupings of the left and independents. The strength of opposition was probably not well reflected in the mainstream media, which strongly backed the government: of three major national newspapers, 83% of coverage was

⁸ Mahon, J: *Tribunal of inquiry into certain planning matters and payments*. Dublin, Oireachtas Eireann, 2012 (final report); the term 'kleptocracy' from the Greek κλέπτης, 'thief' and κράτος 'power, rule', a government characterized by corruption 'and which uses its position to distribute resources to its associates and supporters at the expense of the wider population, often with pretense of honest service'; John Devitt (ed): *National Integrity Systems - country study addendum, Ireland, 2012*. Dublin, Transparency International, 2012.

⁹ Byrne, Elaine: *A crooked harp? Political corruption in Ireland*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2012; Cullen, Paul: *Coalition divides up blood board positions*. *Irish Times*, 7th January 2013; McGee, Harry: *McGuinness revelations do not warrant resignation*. *Irish Times*, 12th June 2013; Bielenberg, Kim: *Revealed - surge in lotto cash for Kenny's home base*. *Irish Independent*, 8th May 2012; Wall, Martin & Cullen, Paul: *Primary care list altered evening before launch*. *Irish Times*, 24th November 2012; Suiter, Jane: *Political patronage still controls the purse strings*. *Irish Times*, 4th May 2010; Fitzgerald, Garret: *State board appointments clean-up long overdue*. *Irish Times*, 5th June 2010.

¹⁰ McGreevy, Ronan: *Ireland last when it comes to trust in coalition*. *Irish Times*, 28th January 2011.

¹¹ O'Brien, Carl: *Children in care have no social workers*. *Irish Times*, 22nd February 2013.

supportive.¹² Resistance to austerity included the intellectual (TASC think tank, NERI Institute); *ad hoc* NGO coalitions (*The poor can't pay*); social movements (e.g. *Claiming our future*); occasional protests of community workers (*Spectacle of defiance*) and an occupation of Dame st, dispersed in time for the St Patrick's day parade, but they failed to achieve an impactful critical mass.¹³ In the voluntary and community sector, The Wheel provided an annual budget analysis. Strangely, the only new political movement to emerge from the austerity experience was a breakaway group from Fine Gael occasioned by abortion legislation, likely to take the form of a 'reform' party whose social orientation is at this stage unclear.

The austerity programme had similarities and differences with the previous great upheaval, the *Programme for National Recovery* (1987) and the development of social partnership. Then, housing and health were most affected, both leaving a legacy to the present time, with few reductions in social welfare and education. This time, health was hardly affected, social welfare more, while the smaller housing budget was redirected toward the subsidization of landlords (€403m, 2013). Social partnership no longer functioned as a means of reaching consensus on economic and social policy, although its structures remained in place to facilitate access to officials.

Continuity remained in evidence in the overall balance of economic and social policy, which continued to be orientated toward the axis of 'Boston' rather than 'Berlin'.¹⁴ State investment in education fell from 13.7% in 2000 to 9.7% in 2010 and during the celtic tiger period was the fourth lowest in Europe.¹⁵ International comparison identified a sharp fall in educational standards (e.g. reading, maths) this century.¹⁶ Primary class sizes, 24.1, are far above the European average, 18.7. Educational performance is highly contingent on social class and location, from early cognitive ability to third level, where progression varies from 15% in some postal districts to 100% in others.¹⁷ Irish health spending is higher than the European average, but is inflated by drug costs 50% higher than the rest of the EU, underperforms and delivers

¹² Merceille, Julien: *The role of the media in fiscal consolidation programmes - the case of Ireland*. Cambridge Journal of Economics, December 2013.

¹³ Hearne, Rory, forthcoming (2014); Social Justice Ireland: *What would real recovery look like?* Socio-economic review, 2013. Dublin, author, 2013; Kirby, Peadar & Murphy, Mary: *Toward a second republic - Irish politics after the celtic tiger*. London, Pluto Press, 2011; Murphy, Mary P: *Participating in popularizing policy alternatives - a case study of Claiming our future*; and Sheehan, Helena: *Occupying Dublin - riding the wave* in Deiric O Broin & Mary P Murphy (eds): *Politics, participation and power - civil society and public policy in Ireland*. Dublin, Glasnevin Press, 2013; Fergus O'Ferrall (ed): *Toward a flourishing society*. Dublin, TASC, 2012.

¹⁴ This refers to the remarks made by Mary Harney, Tanaiste, 21st July 2011 that Ireland was closer to the American model of development, with its individualism, low taxes and low levels of social investment, compared to the European model of high social protection, equality, solidarity and higher taxes.

¹⁵ OECD: *Education at a glance*, 2013. Paris, author, 2013; Flynn, Sean: *Irish education spending in boom was fourth lowest in OECD*. Irish Times, 8th September 2010.

¹⁶ Flynn, Sean: *Irish students drop in rankings for literacy and maths and Shattering the myth of a world-class education system*. Irish Times, 8th December 2010.

¹⁷ Healy, Alison: *Children from poorer backgrounds over a year behind in language skills, study finds*. Irish Times, 29th September 2010; Flynn, Sean & McGuire, Peter: *Less than 15% in some Dublin areas going to college*. Irish Times, 18th November 2010.

fewer beds and doctors than other states. It is considered to compare poorly to Northern Ireland.¹⁸

Although Ireland exited the troika programme in December 2013, the austerity programme remains in effect for at least another year, with a further €3.5bn of cuts to be announced October 2014. Although government spending will begin to recover in 2016, social spending departments are excluded. The next general election is due in February 2016. On the basis of current polling, the most likely outcome a Fine Gael - led coalition with Fianna Fail, meaning a continuation of the austerity programme.

2.2 Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, the incomplete 1998 Good Friday Agreement has achieved a degree of political stability, with the devolved institutions now in uninterrupted operation since May 2007 and taking responsibility for security in April 2010. The governmental situation remains stable, politically dominated by the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin, who in the last, fourth Assembly election, May 2011, took 30% and 27% of the vote respectively.¹⁹ The executive continues to function, albeit in the departmental silos of the d'Hondt system of ministerial selection, ministers effectively running their departments without collective responsibility and arguably, little accountability.²⁰

Many of the core problems arising from the conflict have still not been resolved, with peace walls (99) still intact, civil disturbances being an intermittent feature of the calendar, with the failure of the Haass - O'Sullivan mission on flags, parades and the past. The Assembly has a minimal legislative role, enacting only one Bill in 2011 and five Bills in 2012. Despite there being an executive led by the DUP, working class loyalism remains alienated from a government that has not yet been successful in addressing its long-standing problems of exclusion. There is an overall narrative of a nationalist trajectory toward equality, inevitably seen as a loss to the other side.²¹ Whereas in 2001, only two of the most affluent wards were catholic, six are now, the new ones all in Castlereagh, Peter Robinson's constituency. University enrollment is predominantly catholic and female. Voter assessment rates progress as fastest in the areas of policing, justice, peace, stability and the situation of the catholic minority, but negative in the fields of the economy, health and education. Social attitudes in Northern Ireland on such issues as gay marriage and abortion remain much more traditional than in the Republic.

¹⁸ Cullen, Paul: *Health spending falling faster in Ireland than elsewhere in Europe*. *Irish Times*, 20th November 2012; Burke, Sara: *Harney did great harm to health service*. *Irish Times*, 22nd January 2011; Pollak, Andy: *Why is the Republic's health system so poor?* Armagh, Centre for Cross Border Studies, January 2011.

¹⁹ The outcome of seats was Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), 38 seats; Sinn Féin, 29; Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), 16; Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), 14; Alliance, 8; others 3.

²⁰ Wilson, Robin: *A platform for change - renewing and realigning politics in Northern Ireland*. Belfast, author, 2009.

²¹ Nolan, Paul: *The Northern Ireland peace monitoring report*. §2. Belfast, Community Relations Council, 2013.

Northern Ireland has not endured the same organizational upheavals as the Republic. Indeed, at a time when the government there was extinguishing the Combat Poverty Agency, Northern Ireland's *Programme for Government 2011-15* included a range of investments in housing, fuel poverty, regeneration, childcare and a dedicated £13m programme to tackle rural poverty and social exclusion.

Relationships between the voluntary sector and government in Northern Ireland are governed by a *Concordat* (2011), designed to create the conditions for a thriving voluntary and community sector that can contribute to policy and services. Because of the resumption of the institutions and 'normal' politics, the 'voice' of the voluntary sector, the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action may not have the same direct influence on government as it had during the long period of direct rule. Two important parts of the 1998 agreement are not in operation, the Civic Forum in Northern Ireland (mothballed 2002) and the North-South Civil Society Forum (never opened), which mean that a civil society presence has been absent from reconstruction.

2.3 Headlines

In summary, the headlines of our political and institutional context are:

- In Ireland, despite a change in government, a continuation of the austerity programme likely to ensure long beyond the troika exit;
- The dismantling of the state's social policy architecture, with the end of active social partnership;
- The continuing high cost of transactional corruption;
- The weak, ineffective nature of resistance to the austerity programme;
- The persistence of the *Boston* model of social development, in preference to *Berlin*;
- In Northern Ireland, there is now a level of political stability, but an incomplete, imperfect political settlement with unresolved issues; key civil society institutions from the 1998 agreement still not yet established; and a voluntary and community sector much less influential than in the past.

3 Context: economic and social

This chapter looks at the general context (3.1); the situation for those groups in which the trust has focussed its programme (3.2) and then Northern Ireland (3.3).

3.1 General

2008 is the watershed year for our economic and social context, March marking the beginning of the collapse of Anglo Irish Bank. The broad outline of the economic and social crisis that began in autumn 2008 is well known: it will not be repeated here, but it is appropriate to focus on those aspects with the most bearing on social policy.

The early years of the 21st century saw an extraordinary economic expansion, fueled by pro-cyclical spending policies, leading to Ireland briefly becoming the richest nation state per head of population in the EU, 148% the European average, now fallen to 127%, behind the Netherlands and Austria.²² With the crisis, Irish GNP fell from €162bn in 2007 to €127bn in 2011, down - 21.6%, while net household wealth fell -22%. The state agreed to address bad bank debt of between €50bn - €90bn, which may take up to 30 years to clear and will impose a long shadow on public finances. Government debt as a proportion of GDP rose from 25% in 2007 to describe a sharp upward trajectory to 117% in 2012. The cost of servicing the debt rose from €2.4bn a year to €8.2bn in 2014.

The immediate consequences of the crisis were a decline in economic activity and a rapid rise in unemployment, but the most severe social damage was done by the form of austerity régime followed. The government adopted what was called the *National recovery plan 2011-2014*, which involved an adjustment of €15bn, divided between reduced spending of €10bn and increased revenue of €5bn over the period to 2016. Analysis of the accumulated impact of budgets over 2008-2013 shows a loss of about -12.5% of income for the lowest income group, but less for middle-income groups.²³ Social Justice Ireland calculated that the poorest 10% lost 18.4% of their incomes, compared to 11.4% for the richest.²⁴

Unemployment was as low as 69,700 people in 2001 (4%), but began to rise sharply from 2008, reaching 323,000 in 2012 (15%), falling back slightly thereafter, now 12.4%.²⁵ Although other European countries are higher (e.g. Spain, Greece), Ireland contrasts poorly with other European countries with whom it used to share low rates (e.g. Austria). Long-term unemployment rose from 27% in 2008 to 62% presently, men in construction and women in retail being most obviously affected, with Ireland having

²² Eurostat: *Eurostat yearbook*, 2012. Luxembourg, author, 2013.

²³ Callan, Tim *et al*: *Distributional impact of tax, welfare and public service pay policies - budget 2014 and budgets 2009-2014*. Dublin, Economic and Social Research Institute, 2013.

²⁴ Social Justice Ireland: *Who really took the hits during Ireland's bail-outs?* Dublin, author, 2013.

²⁵ Note that these are labour force definitions of unemployment. Live register figures have been as high as 430,900; neither take into account under-employment or involuntary part-time work.

the highest male long-term unemployment rate in Europe. Youth unemployment is twice the national level, 28%. Benefits have become ever more conditional and although government has introduced what are termed 'activation' measures for the unemployed, they appear to fall far short of European standards.²⁶

Ireland traditionally had a high rate of poverty, but the proportion of those below the poverty line fell in the early years of the new century to 14.1% in 2009. With the introduction of austerity policies, it entered a sharp upward path: 14.7% in 2010, 16% in 2011, a rate of increase faster than Greece. Average net weekly household incomes fell from €881 in 2009 to €801 (2011), with single parent households identified as those most at risk of poverty.²⁷ Those groups most likely to be below the poverty line are children (18.8%), unemployed, those on home duties, those with the least educational qualifications and a significant proportion within the workforce. The vulnerability of unemployed people to poverty is axiomatic, for the rate of benefit for those who are unemployed (€188) is set significantly below the poverty line (€209.40).

This pattern is matched by inequality. There was a downward trend in inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, over 2005-9, when it fell to 29%, but has since risen to a level of 31%, where it may have stabilized. Ireland is the fifth most unequal of the 53 European member states of the World Health Organization, all the more striking granted Ireland's still wealthy position in a European context.²⁸ In the Bertelsmann Foundation social justice index of 31 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, Ireland was rated below average, 29th for access to education and 31st for spending on early childhood education.²⁹

Women continue to be unequal. The rate of female participation in the labour force reached 54.7% in 2007, compared to 73% for men, but has since fallen back to 52.8% (67.8% for men). Women comprise 70% of part-time workers and are more represented in low-pay occupations. Irish childcare stands out in Europe as among the costliest (25% to 52% of incomes), least resourced, with the poorest density of services, behind all but three other EU states.³⁰ State investment in childcare is 0.2% GDP, compared to over 1% in the nordic countries. Women's employment falls from 85% for those without children to 51% for those with young children. Women continue to be poorly represented in decision-making, comprising only 16% of local authority councillors, 15% of deputies, 8% of board members and earn 17% less than men despite having higher educational qualifications (89% complete second level, compared to 83% men; while 50% complete third level, compared to 40% men).³¹

²⁶ Pobal: *Employment and social inclusion in rural areas - a fresh start*. Dublin, author, 2013.

²⁷ O'Brien, Dan: *Quarter of population classified as deprived*. *Irish Times*, 24th February 2013.

²⁸ Marmot, Michael: *Review of social determinants and the health divide in the WHO European region*. Copenhagen, World Health Organization, 2013.

²⁹ Bertelsman Foundation: *Social justice in the OECD - how do member states compare?* Gütersloh, author, 2012.

³⁰ Crosbie, Judith: *Ireland ranks poorly in comparison with childcare across developed states*. *Irish Times*, 30th May 2013; Duncan, Pamela: *Irish childcare presents 26% of parents from returning to jobs*. *Irish Times*, 5th December 2013.

³¹ Smyth, Jamie: *Women get €160,000 less over lifetime*. *Irish Times*, 4th March 2009; O'Connor, Orla: *Women's rights and equality must be at centre of social change in 2014*. *Irish Times*, 6th January 2014.

3.2 Particular areas of interest

Three areas are of particular interest to the trust: the homeless, prisoners and Travellers and their situation is reviewed here (3.2.1 - 3.2.3).

3.2.1 Homeless

As was the case with poverty and inequality generally, in the period before the crisis it appeared that inroads had at last been made into the dimensions of homelessness in Ireland.³² In 2008, the government adopted *The way home* strategy, one committed to housing solutions to homelessness, the reduction of the emergency shelter population and the elimination of involuntary rough sleeping, very much in line with long-standing proposals by voluntary organizations.³³ Policy was brought into line with what voluntary organizations had proposed for many years and was universally acclaimed. Since then, there is strong evidence that the problem has become more severe, with services overwhelmed.

The 2011 census found a stock of 3,808 homeless people. The worsening situation of the homeless, with rough sleeping in Dublin trebling, prompted the highest-ever volume of debate in the Oireachtas in autumn 2013.³⁴ Charities reported ever greater pressure on their services, Simon alone meeting 5,245 people, + 24%, while the Fr Peter McVerry Trust accommodated 2,127 and provided 57,000 meals.³⁵ Crosscare reported that by end 2013, its 150 emergency beds were 'always full'. The persistence of the problem prompted a fresh analysis by government, the *Oversight report* (December 2013).³⁶ This correctly identified many of the measures required to ensure progress in reducing homelessness, principally the onward supply of accommodation and the limited capacity of voluntary social housing providers, but understated the difficulty of making progress in the absence of a supply of dedicated municipal housing and made no legislative proposals to oblige local authorities to carry out their responsibilities.

³² O'Sullivan, Eoin: *Reducing homelessness in the Republic of Ireland - policies and processes*. Paper presented European seminar homelessness research, Social Research Institute, Copenhagen, 21st-22nd September 2005.

³³ Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government: *The way home: strategy to address adult homelessness in Ireland, 2008-13*, Dublin, author, 2008.

³⁴ See *Oireachtas bulletins*, Dublin Region Homeless Executive, <http://www.homelessdublin.ie/>.

³⁵ Holland, Kitty: *Rough sleeping trebles in one year*. *Irish Times*, 25th November 2013; and *Homeless charity 'at breaking point'*. *Irish Times*, 19th December 2013; Murtagh, Peter: *Homelessness now worse than ever, says McVerry*. *Irish Times*, 11th September 2013; O'Brien, Carl: *Rise in numbers sleeping rough*. *Irish Times*, 30th May 2013.

³⁶ Kennedy, Mark; Langford, Sylva; Fahey, Tony: *Homelessness oversight group, first report*. Dublin, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013. 'Stock' means the number homeless on any one night, whereas 'flow' is the numbers homeless in the course of a year (those entering, remaining in and leaving homelessness), where figures are likely to be around 5,000.

Youth homelessness is a distinct subset of the homeless problem. The government published the *Youth homelessness strategy* (2001). A recent review came to the conclusion that the prevalence of youth homelessness had declined; accommodation options and services had improved; but that there were some distinct areas where improvements were still necessary.³⁷

Homelessness is a function of the interaction of a wider set of social policies, principally in housing but also in social welfare, employment health and mental health. The significant change in housing policy that began with the so-called *Programme for National Recovery* (PNR) (1987) has accelerated, with the end of municipal housing construction, the growth of voluntary social housing organizations and, since 2006, a sharp increase in the use of private rented accommodation and government funding overwhelmingly concentrated on the subsidization of tenants. Since the PNR, the numbers on local authority waiting lists have risen from 19,000 to over 89,000. Municipal housing fell from 7,002 completions to 253, while voluntary social housing fell from 1,900 in 2007 to 677 in 2012.³⁸ Under new arrangements introduced by the current government, social housing organizations will convert to Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs). They will be funded commercially, which will drive up the cost of social housing but have the advantage for government of taking social housing off the government accounts.

3.2.2 Travellers

Turning to Travellers, there are 29,573 Travellers in Ireland (2011 census), +32% on 2006, although the true figure may be higher. Since the start of the economic and social crisis, Travellers have, like others, suffered from fewer economic and employment opportunities, reduced social welfare payments and a contraction in the infrastructure of Traveller organizations and services. Investment in the Traveller community has declined to an egregious degree.³⁹ Over 2008-2013, funding for Traveller education fell -86.6%, equality measures -76.3%, national Traveller organizations -63.6%, the FAS special initiative for Travellers, -50% and youth projects, -29.8%. Funding for the interagency programme, flagged as a vital national programme, was eliminated. The only funding lines for Travellers to be maintained were the social economy programme (FAS) and the National Traveller Money Advice and Budgeting Service (NTMABS). Granted the still grievous living conditions for Travellers, the reduction in funding for accommodation was especially remarkable: funding fell from €40m in 2008 to €3m in 2014, down -93.5%. A striking feature was that many state agencies underspent even the limited resources made available to assist Travellers: underspend rates ranged from 18% in health to 28% in equality initiatives, 36% in accommodation and 40% in the special initiative, the money being returned to the exchequer. There has never been an explanation by government as to why Travellers, long accepted as the poorest single identifiable group in Irish society, should experience such high level of reductions.

³⁷ Denter, Sean; Sheehan, Aisling & Bowser, Avery: *Every child a home - review of the implementation of the youth homelessness strategy*. Dublin, Centre for Effective Services, 2013.

³⁸ O'Brien, Carl: *Social housing output at all-time low*. *Irish Times*, 20th January 2014 (figures for Q1-3); *Young people forming new and growing wave of homeless as rents and cuts bite*. *Irish Times*, 21st January 2014.

³⁹ Pavee Point: *Travelling with austerity - impact of cuts on Travellers, Traveller projects and services*. Dublin, author, 2013.

Local authorities are currently drawing up Traveller accommodation programmes for 2014-19, but the government continues to reject proposals they be taken out of the hands of the local authorities and put in the hands of an independent agency, as happened in Northern Ireland when local authorities could not be trusted to deliver housing fairly. The conditions of some sites (e.g. Labre Park, Dublin) remain lamentable, while Spring Lane in Cork, a 33-family site in a quarry has been described as 'third world, a health hazard and dangerous'. The National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee most recent report indicates that 1,200 families live on unauthorized sites, sharing, or in temporary locations, effectively homeless.⁴⁰ Ireland has been brought to the Council of Europe under a class action (collective complaint) by the European Roma Rights Centre for its persistent failure to provide accommodation.⁴¹

3.2.3 Prisoners

The Irish penal system continues to be characterized by a small prison population but high rates of imprisonment (380‰, compared to a European average of 233‰), a paradox explicable by generous use of short periods of imprisonment (average: 3 months, Europe 9.7 months). The number of committals to prison rose 45% over 2007-11, falling back slightly to 17,026 in 2012, of whom almost half (8,304) were sent to prison for non-payment of fines. 88% of committals are for less than a year. Prison numbers crossed the 4,000 mark for the first time, 4,409 in 2010, twice that of ten years earlier. The standard occupancy rate is 103.7%. The women's prison is a microcosm of the problem: annual referrals have risen from 155 to 1990 to 2,092 in 2012; 83% are for less than three months; and the prison is overcrowded (capacity, 105; occupancy, 141).⁴² The Irish penal system continues to be highly resistant to reform.⁴³ Referrals to non-custodial alternatives, such as the Probation Service, actually declined in 2012. Conditions in prison remain poor, with lack of treatment facilities and high rates of lock-up. Irish prisons continue the practice, unique in Europe, of slopping out in eating areas, now ruled as lawful.⁴⁴ The Inspector of Prisons condemned Mountjoy as 'unsafe, inhumane and degrading', overcrowded (680 in a design space of 489), with up to eight in a cell area at a time. Almost a third were functionally illiterate.⁴⁵ Travellers and minorities are over-represented in the prison population, comprising 29%.⁴⁶ By contrast, only one person has been to prison since 2003 for tax evasion.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Pavee Point, *op cit*; Holland, Kitty: *A rundown site for 24 families, now home to 43*. *Irish Times*, 25th November 2013 and Traveller protest over 'total failure of housing strategy'. *Irish Times*, 26th November 2013.

⁴¹ Comité Européen des Droits Sociaux: *European Roma Rights Centres vs Ireland*. Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2013.

⁴² Holland, Kitty: *Women's prison lost its way, says judge*. *Irish Times*, 4th December 2013.

⁴³ Vaughan, Barry: *Toward a model penal system*. Dublin, Irish Penal Reform Trust, 2006; O'Halloran, Marie: *Over 3,000 jailed for non-payment of fines, 56% increase on last year*. *Irish Times*, 31st December 2009.

⁴⁴ Lally, Conor: *Overcrowded prison system an absolute disaster, report finds*. *Irish Times*, 15th March 2012; *Ex-prisoner loses his "slopping out" action*. *Irish Times*, 15th July 2010.

⁴⁵ Lally, Conor: *Overcrowding at Mountjoy requires 'urgent attention'*. *Irish Times*, 25th September 2009.

⁴⁶ Coulter, Carol: *Over-representation of minorities in jails*. *Irish Times*, 3rd April 2009.

⁴⁷ Logue, Patrick: *Only one person jailed for serious tax evasion since 2003*. *Irish Times*, 27th February 2009.

Increased incarceration took place at a time of decline in the crime rate, attributed to the fall in the disposable incomes that fueled the demand for drugs and alcohol; and the success of police action against drug traffickers. Homicides fell from 132 in 2007 to 78 in 2012. Illegal drug use (defined as taking drugs in the course of a year) is believed to have peaked at 7.2% in 2007, falling to 7% in 2011, with cocaine use in the 15-24 age group falling -33% and ecstasy use halved. This is welcome, for Irish cocaine use was high by European standards, with heroin the highest. These reductions may be matched by increased use of prescription and psychoactive drugs.⁴⁸

3.3 Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland has not endured as sharp an economic contraction as the Republic, instead sharing the recession that characterized the UK economy.⁴⁹ There has been a steady decline across the Northern Ireland economy since 2007, construction being most affected but also tourism.⁵⁰ If we look at the picture from 2007-2012, labour force participation and employment are unchanged, unemployment has risen from 4.1% to 7.2% (but this may understate it in comparison to Ireland as different definitions of 'unemployment' are in use). The main bright spot was that earnings rose 9% over five years.⁵¹ The overall flat economic picture is expected to continue into 2014, with a growth rate of 0.8% and a continued rise in unemployment.

Northern Ireland remains a relatively disadvantaged region within the UK. A problem with outlining its social situation is that its data is set in a UK context and metric, making direct comparison with the Republic difficult. In a UK context, Northern Ireland has lower incomes, higher benefit dependency (23% compared to 16%), with a higher level of poverty an enduring feature.⁵² It is the UK region with the third lowest living standards, about 80% of the average. Northern Ireland suffers from a weak private sector overall, evident in production, low skills and low wages: 30% of jobs are in the public sector, compared to 20% in Great Britain. A recent Whitehall analysis commented that 'Although the Good Friday Agreement is now more than 12 years old it is obvious that, although helpful, peace has not in itself been sufficient to raise Northern Ireland prosperity to the UK average. Northern Ireland is still one of the weakest economies in the UK' (quoted in Nolan, *op cit*). The level of unemployment is not especially high in UK terms, but the employment rate is lower, educational qualifications are lower, with the better qualified migrating out to the rest of the British Isles. It has the highest UK level of single-earner households. 29% of adults have no educational qualifications, possibly an outcome of the selection system, the education system having both a well-performing top end but a substantially underperforming

⁴⁸ Lally, Conor: *Illegal drug use in decline for first time in a decade*. *Irish Times*, 16th November 2011; *State has EU's most acute heroin problem*. 23rd November 2011.

⁴⁹ 'Recession' means two quarters without economic growth, or low levels of negative growth.

⁵⁰ Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment: *Economic commentary and Monthly economic update*, January 2013. Belfast, DETI, 2013; MacInnes, Tom *et al*: *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland in 2012*. York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation & New Policy Institute, 2012.

⁵¹ NERI Institute: *Quarterly economic observer*. January 2013.

⁵² MacInnes, Tom *et al*: *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland*. York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2012.

bottom end, especially protestant men. Drug usage rates are similar to the Republic. Suicide rates rose dramatically after the ceasefires and are now at the highest level in the UK, 16‰, compared to 11.4‰ in the Republic.

The overall poverty level is higher than the Republic, 20%, with the child poverty rate higher, 22%. It is higher in the rural and western areas (23%-24%) than in eastern or rural areas (17%) and affects the nationalist community more (26%) than the unionist (19%). In child poverty, of the 20 worst affected parts of the UK, Northern Ireland has locations in the top 20: Derry, Belfast and Strabane.

Progress has been made in women's pay and employment and in improved educational opportunities. Residential segregation has diminished for the first time, with the proportion of single identity wards falling from 50% in 2001 to 37% in 2011 and a corresponding rise in mixed identity housing and shared public spaces. Despite widespread support for integrated education, it remains as segregated as ever. Like the rest of the British Isles, there is a persistent gender divide. Women chair only 14% of public boards, the Assembly comprises only 18.5% women (better than the Dail but less than Great Britain) and 23.5% of councillors.

Turning to the trust's particular areas of interest, there are 1,774 prisoners (2012), rising from 1,465 in 2009 (+21%). This is 96‰ of the population compared to 80.5‰ in the Republic and 154‰ in Great Britain, placing it at the liberal end of the spectrum compared to Great Britain, which is exceeded only by Russia (495) and the US (730). Like the Republic, it includes a significant number sent for non-payment of fines (14,000 in 2011). Occupancy rate in prisons is 82.7% and the rate of imprisonment is lower.⁵³ Crime in Northern Ireland has fallen from 142,000 recorded crimes in 2003 steadily down to 103,000 in 2011, half the rate of England and Wales. There were 16 homicides in 2012, halved since 2001, while sectarian and hate crimes have also declined.

There are 1,710 Travellers in Northern Ireland, probably an underestimate.⁵⁴ Travellers were identified as a distinct ethnic group under the Race Relations Order (NI), 1997 marking the situation as more progressive than the Republic where it is still denied. Responsibility for accommodation was transferred from the local authorities to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) under the Housing order (NI), 2003. Despite this, progress in providing accommodation has been mixed, model projects alongside squalor, with 37% still on the roadside in 2005. As in the Republic, their living conditions, life expectancies and health match those of third world countries.

⁵³ Europolitics, 15th June 2011, §4221.

⁵⁴ Redmond, Andrea: *Out of sight, out of mind - an historical overview of accommodating Irish Travellers' nomadic culture in Northern Ireland*. Shared space, undated.

The level of homelessness in Northern Ireland rose from 2006 to 2011, the figure being a flow of 20,158 households presenting (10,443 accepted), which may reflect a wider definition than that in use in the Republic. Accommodation for the homeless is, under the Housing (NI) Order 1988 the responsibility of the NIHE, its present approach being the *Homeless strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017*. It bears many similarities to the strategy in the Republic, with an emphasis on prevention, minimizing time homeless and onward accommodation. The total on the NIHE housing list rose from 36,182 to 39,891, a comparable level to the Republic.

3.4 Headlines

The headlines of the economic and social context are as follows:

- In the Republic, the economic and social crisis of 2008 has led to a dramatic worsening in social indicators, such as unemployment, poverty and inequality in a country of historic underdevelopment in social protection, education and health. Gender inequality is compounded by continuing underinvestment in childcare;
- Austerity policies are formally set to continue for another year and the scale of debt entered into makes their continuation likely for the foreseeable future;
- There is strong evidence that the poorest income deciles have suffered the most from the economic and social crisis and the subsequent austerity policies;
- Dealing with the three particular areas of interest to the trust, homelessness has worsened sharply, exacerbated by the diminished supply of social housing; Travellers have suffered from austerity policies more than any other single group; and although crime rates have declined, the prison population continues to rise, some prison conditions being formally ruled as unacceptable;
- Northern Ireland has endured a much shallower economic contraction but continues to have a poor economic and social performance as a region of the UK;
- Dealing with those area of most interest to the trust, crime continues to decline but the imprisonment profile is similar. The small population of Travellers continues to live in difficult conditions. The picture of housing need and homelessness is broadly comparable.

4 Emerging social need

To identify emerging social need is challenging. Chapter 2, *Political and institutional context*, drew attention to the reduction of the state social policy infrastructure, which meant that state bodies responsible for identifying and responding to social need were eliminated, such as the Combat Poverty Agency and the National Economic and Social Forum. Another agency extinguished was the Irish Research Council for the Humanities. Writers such as Lee⁵⁵ had long been critical of the low intellectual base of the Irish state, considering it a major impediment to national development: a proposal to establish a social research council was eventually made in 1999.⁵⁶ It lasted 13 years being abolished in 2012, merged with the Irish Research Council for Science Engineering and Technology: its main allocations are now in engineering, chemistry and molecular biology, with 2% for social work and none identified for social policy.⁵⁷ As a result, the state has, effectively, no machinery for identifying emerging social need. The government public procurement service, *eTenders*, has no category for social policy. Here, we have relied on the census, academic community, voluntary and community organizations, the Oireachtas and media as places where a composite picture of emerging social need may be identified.

4.1 Deprivation trends analysis

Chapter 3: Economic and social context referred to the improvement of social trends in the early years of the century, a possible outcome of the investment associated with the National Anti Poverty Strategy (1997) and social partnership. The fall in unemployment to 4% brought a sharp reduction in one category most vulnerable to poverty, namely the unemployed. Despite the economic and social crisis, some social trends continue to be positive. There has been an increase in the proportions with educational qualifications, professional qualifications, improvements in housing conditions, environmental quality, access to computer and internet (81%). Ireland has performed much better than the European average in early school leaving.

The spatial pattern of social need continued to evolve. In the early years of the new century, the geography of poverty moved from the border regions and the west to the midlands and the south-east, with its continued persistence in distinct rural areas. Spatially, the impact of the crisis in 2008 was felt across the entire country but was especially evident in traditional areas of high poverty, especially the north west.⁵⁸ In terms of population types, the sharpest increases in deprivation were evident in small towns of populations of 3,000 to 5,000, more so than predominantly rural or urban areas.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Lee, Joe: *Ireland 1912-85*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988.

⁵⁶ Bric, Maurice: *The humanities and the social sciences - a case for a research council*. Dublin, the Higher Education Authority, 1999.

⁵⁷ Irish Research Council: *Overview report*, 2012. Dublin, author, 2013.

⁵⁸ Haase, Trutz & Pratschke, Jonathan: *2011 Pobal HP deprivation index for small areas*. Dublin, authors, 2012.

⁵⁹ Pobal: *Employment and social inclusion in rural areas - a fresh start*. Dublin, author, 2013.

In Dublin, the overall pattern of deprivation has been remarkably stable since 1991 (affluent southside, poor peripheries), with the striking exception of the inner city, which changed from being one of its most disadvantaged parts to becoming one of its more affluent (but with extreme contrasts of wealth and deprivation).⁶⁰ Lone parents remain one of the groups most at risk of poverty, but while lone parenting is concentrated in urban areas, especially those most disadvantaged, is now more evenly spread to rural areas. Poverty is concentrated in local authority housing, those displaced or isolated by urban regeneration and those located in long-neglected municipal accommodation. In some estates, most visibly the old inner city estates of Dublin and Limerick, the concentration of poverty and squalor can be extreme, years of neglect compounded by the ill-advised introduction of public private partnerships to manage regeneration.⁶¹ Before looking at new poverties and the 'new poor' next, it is worth inserting the view of informants that 'the nature of poverty has not fundamentally changed. The scale, intensity and extent have'.

4.2 New poverties

One approach, though, is to search for social phenomena which are neologized. Here, the poverty field prompted subsets of poverty such as fuel poverty and others have followed, such as food poverty and water poverty. In this section on new poverties, it is also useful to test suggestions of 'new poor' or new categories of poor.

Dealing first with subsets of poverty, fuel poverty remains an enduring and distinct set.⁶² The Report of the Commission on Older People on the Society of St Vincent de Paul identified fuel poverty as a distinct feature of the poverty of older people on low incomes.⁶³ Ireland has an excess winter mortality of 650, with 1,600 extra hospital admissions of older people.⁶⁴ 51.1% of older people reported going without food or clothing so as to pay for heating for their homes, while almost a quarter described their homes as too cold.⁶⁵ A recent study gave a picture of the interconnectedness of poverty (and its subset, fuel poverty) with debt (especially utility debt). In Ballyfermot, of those seeking debt advice, 52% reporting going without heat for lack of money. 60% were in utility debt, the average being €5,700, three-quarters in uninsulated homes.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Haase, Trutz: *The changing face of Dublin's inner city*. Dublin, Dublin Inner City Partnership, 2009.

⁶¹ Bissett: Regeneration - public good or private profit? Dublin, New Island, 2008; Kelly, Olivia: *State accused of UN rights breach over flats squalor*. *Irish Times*, 26th May 2010.

⁶² Fuel poverty is defined as spending more than 10% of one's income on fuel. Low-income households tend to spend more of their income on fuel, a function of poorly insulated homes, inefficient heating systems and inability to buy fuel in large amounts at a time.

⁶³ Society of St Vincent de Paul: *Report of the Commission on Older People*. Dublin, author, 2011.

⁶⁴ Mc Greevy, Ronan: *Ireland has more winter deaths than Norway, forum told*. *Irish Times*, 7th February 2012.

⁶⁵ McGreevy, Ronan: *Half of older people forgo essentials to pay for heat*. *Irish Times*, 18th December 2011.

⁶⁶ Stamp, Stuart et al: *Profile of clients of Dublin 10 and 20 MABS and the extent and nature of their financial difficulties with a focus on utility debt*. Dublin, Dublin 10&20 MABS, 2014.

Food poverty may be defined in a number of different ways, such as absence of meals or particular food over a defined time for lack of money.⁶⁷ Food poverty rates rose from 7% - 8% in 2005 to 10% by 2012, especially evident in low income deciles where food costs are disproportionately high, especially in under 40 female-headed urban rented households with low levels of education.⁶⁸ The food poor numbered 457,000 in 2010, the main concentration being in Dublin (112,300). There was supporting evidence in the demand on Cork Penny Dinners (1,400 people daily), Crosscare, Twist soup kitchens (360 daily) and the rising spend on food by the Society of St Vincent de Paul (€7m annually). The Capuchin day centre in Dublin feeds up to 950 a day. Apart from groups of destitute adults, food poverty is known to be especially impactful on children, up to 21% being affected.⁶⁹

‘Water poverty’ was introduced to the debate on the Water services \$2 Bill, 2013, defined as spending more than 3% income on water, this being a characteristic of the three lowest income deciles in England and Wales. The government established an interdepartmental group, including the voluntary and community pillar, to advise on future water affordability when charges are introduced in 2015, but they are likely to be high because of out-of-control set-up costs in Uisce Eireann.

The Society of St Vincent de Paul is one of the largest charities in Ireland and its commitment to helping the poor means that it is an important barometer of social need.⁷⁰ The greatest call on its services was for food (23%), followed by fuel (16%), its spending on fuel rising from €3.79m in 2009 to €10.4m in 2012.⁷¹ Calls coming in to the society rose 104% from 2009 to 2012, with over 100,000 people now seeking help. Reductions in ancillary social welfare payments, such as child benefit, impacted on poor families, leading to debt, severe stress and hardship, it reported.⁷² These were compounded by inflation, with consumer prices rising +2.6% in 2011, +1.7% in 2012, more so in utilities.

Crosscare is a similar barometer in the capital. When Crosscare opened its new Information and Advocacy Service in Sackville Place, Dublin in February 2013, it received 9,427 visits from 3,500 people by end November, with 889 turned away, the main issues presenting being denial of or problems with social welfare (37%) and immigration issues (27%), with 33% at risk of homelessness, ‘people slipping through

⁶⁷ Maître, Bertrand & Carney, Caroline: *Constructing a food poverty indicator for Ireland*. Dublin, Department of Social Protection, 2012.

⁶⁸ MANDATE/UNITE: *Hungry for action - mapping food poverty in Ireland*. Dublin, authors, 2013; Healy, Alison: *Food poverty affecting 10% of the population as diets hit by recession*. *Irish Times*, 17th October 2012.

⁶⁹ Freyne, Patrick: ‘You are two steps away from having nowhere to live, with just the clothes you stand in’. *Irish Times*, 18th May 2013; Duncan, Pamela: *One Irish child in five goes to bed hungry - survey*. *Irish Times*, 17th April 2012.

⁷⁰ The largest charities are in the disability and development field (income figures given): Rehab, €187m; Concern, €167m, St Michael’s House, €97m; Society of St Vincent de Paul, €73m; Ability West, €25m; Focus Ireland; €19m.

⁷¹ Boland, Rosita: *Vincent de Paul reports surge in calls from ‘a forgotten layer of society’*. *Irish Times*, 30th January 2013; Holland, Kitty: *Risk of dying of the cold highlighted*. *Irish Times*, 12th March 2013.

⁷² Society of St Vincent de Paul: *The human face of austerity*. Dublin, author, 2012.

the cracks and refused emergency support'.⁷³ Most of those drawing on the services were, arguably, traditional low-income groups at the edge of the poverty line. Although the government prided itself on maintaining basic social welfare rates, most other payments were reduced. Students familiar with the welfare state experience in both Britain and Ireland have long been aware that poverty can only be prevented by supplementary rates alongside basic benefits.⁷⁴ In Ireland, supplementary welfare payments fell from €2.19bn in 2009 to €1.18bn in 2012, down -46% and this may be a significant contributor to these figures.

The 'new poor' is a term that may arise in times of economic and social crisis, the recent experience matching that of the 1980s. Here, the 'new poor' are most closely associated with debt and one of the defining social problems arising from the economic and social crisis was debt or financial exclusion. Lending rose between 700% (credit) and 1,000% (mortgages) over 1995-2008 but when incomes contracted sharply thereafter, many households lost the ability to repay that debt and the proportion of loans in arrears more than 90 days rose from 5.4% in 2008 to almost 20% in 2013, 99,189 people. One third are more than three years overdue. Household debt, although declining as households restructure their debt, is currently estimated at €174bn, over 204% of disposable income and over 100% of GDP, the second highest in Europe, averaging €37,928 per household.⁷⁵ The government put in place a new infrastructure to respond to the problem of indebtedness, the Insolvency Service of Ireland (ISI), accompanied by Personal Insolvency Practitioners (PIPs), the revised Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears (CCMA) and the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP) complementing the long-standing Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS).

Independent commentators have criticized the limited nature of the Irish response; its focus on individual, disciplined money management rather than corporate responsibility; its failure to tackle the different, endemic nature of indebtedness in low-income families; and the much lower level of attention given to solutions more in evidence in continental Europe (e.g. prevention; legally-based debt settlement; sufficient incomes to enable people to manage and save).⁷⁶ These 'new poor' therefore comprises a range, from those in negative equity across to those at risk of losing their homes, especially those in low-income families unable to afford the accumulated costs of home and utility debt. The principal organization to speak out on behalf of this group was FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres).

⁷³ Figures kindly supplied for this research by Conor Hickey, Crosscare.

⁷⁴ Donnison, David: *The politics of poverty*. Martin Robertson, 1982. David Donnison was chairperson of the Supplementary Benefits Commission in 1975 until its abolition in 1980.

⁷⁵ See Central Bank: *Macro-financial review, 2013:1* and *Quarterly bulletin 2013:Q3*; Department of Finance: *Review of 2012*; Dublin, author, 2013 for a fuller exploration of the present figures.

⁷⁶ Stamp, Stuart: *Socializing the loss, personalizing the responsibility and privatizing the response - the Irish policy approach to personal debt post 2008*. Maynooth, Centre on Household Assets and Savings Management, 2013; Dubois, Hans: *Household debt advisory services in the European Union*. Dublin, author, Eurofound, 2011.

Unfortunately, data on the stress on family life caused by the economic and social crisis are limited.⁷⁷ There is evidence, though of accelerated pressure on mental health services, which have historically been underinvested, the government constantly challenged for the slow development of services outlined in *Vision for change* (2006). The service was under considerable stress, with children placed in adult units.⁷⁸ Investment in mental health services was 5.4% of the health budget, far below the 8.24% recommended. Funds dedicated for mental health and suicide prevention services continued to be diverted to shore up HSE deficits.⁷⁹

Finally, in the search for new poverty, it is worth searching for insurgencies by new voluntary organizations, or old ones serving a new purpose as a useful gauge of social need. The most striking one in recent years has been the men's sheds, an Australian-originated concept, with no less than 40 being established in only three years.⁸⁰ Whilst not meeting a social need on the scale of the hardship reported above, they nevertheless serve a valuable function in the needs of men over 50 for activity and companionship after what may have been difficult working lives.

4.3 Minorities

Chapter 1: *Demographic context* noted the extraordinary demographic change in Ireland over 2001-11, with new, immigrant communities coming to comprise 17% of the population. It is worth paying a little more attention to the situation of minorities, as these have been a group at risk in other European countries. The degree of risk varies according to migrant groups, from workers from other European countries, who have a level of social protection under EU law; to workers from further afield; and asylum-seekers, who have the least level of social protection. Whereas most migrant workers enjoy standards of living much higher than in their sending country and can send remittances home, some endure precarious employment, discrimination, low wages and may find themselves in need of social and even homeless services. Migrants have a higher unemployment rate than Irish nationals (18.5%), much higher for Africans (27%). There is evidence of a growing resistance level to immigration, up from 4% to 20%.⁸¹ Some groups may be at especial risk, such as the Roma community in Ireland numbering about 2,500 to 3,000, as evidenced by cases of their children being wrongly taken into care in 2013.⁸² There is an especially vulnerable subset who may be trafficked or at risk of prostitution, their situation highlighted most prominently by immigrant advice organizations such as Doras Luimni.

⁷⁷ Unpublished data are available to the Family Support Agency that reflect the increased pressure on counselling services and Family Resource Centres.

⁷⁸ Smyth, Jamie: *100 children placed in adult psychiatric units*. *Irish Times*, 7th October 2010.

⁷⁹ O'Brien, Carl: *Funds for suicide prevention diverted*. *Irish Times*, 29th December 2012; Coulter, Carol: *Call to realise mental health vision "now"*. *Irish Times*, 12th May 2010.

⁸⁰ Hourihane, Ann-Marie: *The new male bonding*. *Irish Times*, 3rd March 2012.

⁸¹ McGinnity, Frances et al: *Annual monitoring report on integration*. Dublin, ESRI, 2013.

⁸² Smyth, Jamie: *Anti-Roma racism focussed on by report*. *Irish Times*, 2nd January 2010.

Overall, the most vulnerable category is the asylum-seeker placed in direct provision. Those who are not refused permission to land or deported are placed in direct provision hostels while their claims are considered. They are sent to contracted services of bed-and-breakfast hostels, with a small cash payment (€19.10 weekly for adults, €9.60 for children), an amount unchanged since its introduction. In some cases, conditions therein are poor and have come under prolonged criticism from human rights organizations, to the point that some are called 'the modern Magdalens'.⁸³ There is a tacit acceptance by government that this approach is designed to dissuade future refugees and Ireland has opted out of the EU council directive for minimum standards for asylum seekers. Although originally intended as a short-term solution, asylum-seekers find themselves spending many years in direct provision. In November 2013, the average stay was 4 years, with 13% there seven years or more.⁸⁴ Reflecting the fall in claims for asylum, the numbers in the direct provision system fell from 7,002 in 60 centres in 2008 to 4,414 in 35 centres by 2013.⁸⁵ Within the group of asylum seekers, a cohort of especial concern is that of separated children (previously officially called 'unaccompanied minors') who arrived in the country on their own and some of whom may have been trafficked. Numbers over 2000-2010 were in the order of 5,900 who, when they reach adulthood may be termed 'aged-out minors'. Direct provision may be a contributor to the unusually high number of African children the subject of childcare orders.⁸⁶

Unlike Britain, Ireland has not experienced the concentration of minorities in particular towns and cities, but minorities have gravitated around city centres, where jobs and accessible accommodation may best be found (up to 70% of some wards); while those with young families are more likely to be found in suburban communities and comprise a significant proportion of children in individual schools.⁸⁷ A feature of the migrant community (EU, further afield, asylum-seeker) is its high level of educational qualifications, causing the overall standard to rise, many going on to further study and with high educational aspirations for their children.

⁸³ Arnold, Samantha: *State-sanctioned child poverty and exclusion*. Dublin, Irish Refugee Council, 2012.

⁸⁴ Dail Eireann, *Debates*, 26th November 2013, 612-3, figures based on latest entry into the system.

⁸⁵ Seanad Eireann: *Debates*, 25th September 2013, 727.

⁸⁶ Duncan, Pamela: *Report investigates childcare court cases*. *Irish Times*, 6th November 2013.

⁸⁷ Haase, Trutz: *The changing face of Dublin's inner city*. Dublin, Dublin Inner City Partnership, 2009; O'Halloran, Marie: *Immigrant children clustered in schools*. *Irish Times*, 5th March 2013; Duncan, Pamela: *Dublin city electoral division holds most immigrants*. *Irish Times*, 14th May 2012.

4.4 Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland data on changing social need is available from Nolan (*op cit*) who noted, from analyzing census and related data that poverty levels were remarkably stable over 2002-2008, followed by a decline in pensioner and child poverty, but a rise in poverty resulting from both rising unemployment and in-work poverty, 16% to 19%. As in the Republic, fuel poverty remained an acute form of social need. Fuel bills in Northern Ireland are much higher than the rest of the UK (4.9% compared to 3%).⁸⁸ The proportion living in fuel poverty rose in the early 2000s to 34%, a factor of low incomes, higher energy costs and a legacy of poor housing. Lone parents were especially affected. People over 75 with dementia had a 40% likelihood of dying in winter due to cold rather than heart disease or stroke.⁸⁹

Housing patterns in Northern Ireland mirror those of the Republic, with, over the period 2001-2011, a fall in public housing (19% to 12%), matched by a growth in housing association properties ((2.6% to 3.4%) and private rental (6.6% to 14%). The housing minister decided in 2013 to transfer the functions of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to housing associations, which, if pursued, is likely to lead to a substantial rise in housing need.

We have a useful guide to emerging social need from the *Voices* programme, a joint project of Community Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies, for it invited voluntary organizations, community groups and individuals to identify fresh social need and research how it may best be met. The themes arising were: suicide (general, prisoners), women accessing services, hardship for single parents, trafficking, unpaid carers, welfare reform and disability, ethnic minorities, women in debt and ethnic profiling, collectively and individually laying out a fresh agenda of social need.

The 2011 Comprehensive Spending Review effectively froze current government spending in Northern Ireland and announced 20,000 public sector job cuts. The UK government is committed to reducing the Northern Ireland budget by 8% by 2015, while social security is expected to bear half the burden of spending cuts. As a result, social need may well grow while the resources available to meet it may fall.

⁸⁸ Department for Social Development: *Warmer, healthier homes*. Belfast, author, 2010.

⁸⁹ Liddell, Christine: *The impact of fuel poverty on children*. Belfast, Save the Children, undated; with Lagdon, Susan: *Tackling fuel poverty in Northern Ireland*. Belfast, OFMDFM, DSD and University of Ulster, 2013.

4.5 Headlines

The following are the evident emerging social needs: In the Republic,

- A spatial shift in poverty to small towns and a resurgence in the traditionally poor, remote rural areas; a concentration of extremes of poverty and affluence in inner city Dublin; and a persistence of extreme social need in regeneration estates;
- Continued deprivation of single parents and the resurgence of the unemployed as a category in poverty;
- Persistence of fuel poverty, the emergence of food poverty and the threat of water poverty;
- Social distress overwhelming charities such as the Society of St Vincent de Paul and Crosscare, most likely a function of the sharp reduction of social welfare levels, especially supplementary welfare;
- 'New' poverty arising from the debt crisis, taking varying form across the income range, from negative equity to risk of homelessness, but its principal form being low-income home debt often combined with utility debt;
- The vulnerability of some in the new communities, but especially asylum-seekers in direct provision, with important subsets of unaccompanied children, aged-out minors and those trafficked.

In Northern Ireland,

- Rise of poverty for those in work and the unemployed;
- Persistence and worsening of fuel poverty;
- Likely emerging growth in housing need.

5 Funding trends

This chapter surveys funding trends for the voluntary and community sector, with an eye to those aspects of most interest to the trust. The chapter is divided into the general picture (5.1), trends by funder (5.2), Northern Ireland (5.3) and those areas of greatest interest to the trust (5.4), before headlines are reported (5.5).

5.1 General

There are about 7,980 charitable voluntary organizations in Ireland, the largest concentration being in the health and social services field.⁹⁰ The value of the voluntary and community sector was estimated in 2008 as having a value of €6.5bn, or between 3.52% and 3.97% of GNP, with an employment of 53,098 Full Time Equivalents (FTE). The broad outlines of funding for voluntary and community organizations have been known for a number of years. Their main sources are government (53%), personal giving (25%), foundations (3%) and the corporate sector (2%). By international standards, both corporate and foundation funding are unusually low in Ireland. Corporate funding, about €25m or 0.1% pre-tax profits, generally gives small amounts to numerous local charities in an unstrategic manner. There are about 20 active grant-giving foundations in Ireland, the lowest density in Europe, 0.7‰, compared to a European average of 20‰, with total value around €60m.⁹¹

Personal giving in Ireland is well supported, about 80% of people giving to charity, but normally on request (on-street or at-the-door), rarely strategically, the average amount being 0.4% of weekly income, low compared to northern European countries and less than 20 years ago. Personal donations average €130 per person per year, a cumulative total of €460m.⁹² Only 12% give in a planned way, only 4% availing of tax relief. Those charities which attract the highest donations are the Society of St Vincent de Paul (to which 25% of people give), Trócaire (21%), Concern (15%), the Cancer Society (11%) and then Oxfam (11%). Traditionally, excepting the Society of St Vincent de Paul, all the top charities worked in development: now domestic charities are beginning to intrude, attracting a larger share of the market, the Irish Cancer Society and Barnardos being the striking examples.

⁹⁰ Some sources give higher figures, such as INKEx, around 12,000 (Quinn, Patricia *et al: Irish non-profits - what do we know?* Dublin, INKEx, 2012), but this uses an American-originated definitional system unsuited to Europe and which overstates the size of what most people working therein would understand to be the 'voluntary and community' sector. The definition of voluntary and community sector here draws from Acheson, N *et al: Two paths, one purpose - voluntary action in Ireland, north and south*. Dublin, Institute of Public Administration, 2006.

⁹¹ McKinsey & Co: *Philanthropy in Ireland*. Dublin, author, undated. Percentages per population.

⁹² Smyth, Jamie: *Women in Dublin most generous to charities*. *Irish Times*, 30th May 2011.

Voluntary organizations have broadened and protected their funding base by retailing, with 300 charity shops in the Republic.⁹³ The principal chains are the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Oxfam, the Cancer Society and Enable. At one level, they have benefitted from more frugal shopping patterns and the hollowing out of high street locations, but have suffered from a reduction in donations due to the fall in disposable income and from cash-for-clothes companies that have moved in on their market.⁹⁴ Despite that, shops have maintained an income flow for charitable organizations ahead of the general economic decline. A growing number of Irish charities use electronic crowd fund-raising as a strategy.⁹⁵ Up to 22.7% of donations are now estimated to be online.⁹⁶ Some (e.g. UNICEF) have entered arrangements with the principal mobile companies to promote text donations (www.likecharity.com).

The government recently took the decision to promote philanthropic giving in a structured way with a view to lifting it by 10% annually to €800m by 2016.⁹⁷ It had originally been expected that government intervention would encourage wealthy individuals to establish new or support existing foundations, but its only public campaign, launched 2013 was the 1% *difference* campaign, encouraging all citizens to give up to 1% of their income to charity. The government provided €2.5m match funding and proposed a Social Innovation Fund, also called a Social Venture Fund, though further details are not available. The campaign has been strongly supported in the Seanad, but so far the campaign appears to have made limited impact and there is a concern that its unintended outcome will be to make good cuts in government funding. It has come under further suspicion when some individuals associated with the campaign made unofficial (and not endorsed) proposals to extend tax allowances for tax fugitives to give to charity.⁹⁸ The campaign has been criticized for its messaging that giving to charity should be an alternative to taxation and that it undermines the European social model of solidarity. The campaign hit a raw nerve and prompted a minority view, traditionally associated with the left, that social policy should evolve to the point that charity from the rich to the poor should no longer be necessary.⁹⁹

⁹³ Irish Charity Shops Association, www.icsa.ie.

⁹⁴ Lake, Howard: *Irish charity shops feel pressure from commercial traders*. *Sunday Business Post*, 21st October 2011.

⁹⁵ E.g. www.fundit.ie.

⁹⁶ Donegal Community Workers Cooperative: *Newsletter* §15, March 2013.

⁹⁷ Forum on Philanthropy and Fundraising: *Report*. Dublin, author, 2012.

⁹⁸ See Crowley, Niall: *Why is the state urging us to give to charity?* *Irish Times*, 21st November 2013; *The 1% difference and Government cutbacks*, *The Village*, 2013; Kerins, Angela: *Investing for good*. *Irish Times* supplement, 2013, undated; McManus, John: *Is US-style philanthropy really the best option?* *Irish Times Business Opinion*, 24th June 2013; Browne, Vincent: *The state should not abdicate to charities*. *Irish Times*, 8th January 2014.

⁹⁹ This is expressed at its extreme in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (1932) that 'charity' (Милосердие) is 'aid hypocritically rendered by representatives of the ruling class in an exploiter society to part of the poor population in order to deceive the workers and divert them from the class struggle'.

5.2 Trends by funder

There have been significant changes in funding since 2008. Voluntary organizations have different experiences, depending on the degree to which their funding comes from government, personal giving, foundations or corporate sources (5.2.1-4).

5.2.1 Government

The principal focus is on the pattern of government spending, since that contributes almost two-thirds of the income of the voluntary and community sector. Overall government current spending fell -7.1% over 2008-2014 (€53.4bn to €49.6bn) and will fall a cumulative total of -9.64% (€48.25bn) by end 2015. Funding for voluntary and community organizations, though, has fallen in the order of -35%, but the pattern across sectors has been quite inconsistent. Funding has fallen most sharply in those funding lines reaching the most disadvantaged groups and communities, especially community development; but least in health funding, which is the largest single funder for voluntary organizations. Table 5.1 outlines the level of reduction in funding across the period 2008-2014.

Table 5.1: Change in funding for voluntary and community organizations, 2008-2014 under principal funding lines for the sector

| | 2008 | 2014 | Change |
|-------------------------------|--------|----------|---------|
| Voluntary social housing | 192m | 95.925m | -50% |
| Youth organizations | 8.9m} | {50.53m | -44.1% |
| Special Projects for Youth | 81.6m} | | |
| Arts Council | 81.6m | 56.893 | -30.2% |
| LCDP (community development) | 84.7m | 47.7m | -43.6% |
| Sports grants | 58.1m | 23m | -60.4% |
| Sports council | 57.2m | 44.236 | -22.66% |
| Community Services Programme | 55m | 45.11m | -18% |
| Drugs | 44.3m | 27.951m | -37% |
| Family Support Agency | 36m | 24.294m* | -32.5% |
| CLAR (community development) | 24.1m | 0 | -100% |
| Supports V&C organizations | 18.6m | 10.875m | -41.5% |
| Probation services | 16.7m | 10.773m | -35.5% |
| RAPID (community development) | 9.7m | 1.9 | -80.4% |
| OPMI (migrants) | 6.7m | 2.312m | -65.5% |
| Cosc (violence against women) | 3.1m | 1.915m | -38.2% |
| Women's organizations | 0.585m | 0.3m | -48.7% |

Source: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform: Estimates. Dublin, author, 2008-14.

*2013. The agency ceased to exist end 2013, being made part of the larger Child and Family Support Agency.

The principal benchmark for funding for community organizations is the Local Community Development Programme (LCDP), down -43.3%. We lack information on the level of funding for voluntary and community organizations in the health field, which is a serious information deficit, but the best information is that they have been substantially less than this. The best overall figure is a reduction in funding for voluntary and community organizations by end 2013 is in the order of -35%, four times the level of reduction in overall government spending (-7.1).

Neither the outgoing government, nor the incoming government, ever explained why voluntary and community organizations should see their funding reduced so disproportionately, nor the differential nature of those reductions. The community development sector arguably suffered the most. The Community Development Programme was closed in 2010, the boards of projects disbanded and their assets transferred to the LCDP which in turn transfer to the local authorities from July 2014. From 2015, local development will be tendered as a commercial service, thus bringing to an end the independent stream of community development projects developed by the Combat Poverty Agency in the early 1990s, whose antecedents can be traced to the European programmes against poverty (1975-80, 1985-9, 1989-94) and further back to the work of the Congested Districts Board (1891-1923). In only a few areas was funding for voluntary and community organizations maintained, principally social employment schemes such Community Employment, almost entirely used by voluntary and community organizations (22,000 places) and Tús, presumably reflecting government prioritization of employment policy.

Reductions in funding had a dramatic effect on employment in the voluntary and community sector. Calculations based on the reported reductions of funding indicated that employment fell from 53,098 in 2008 to 41,948 in 2013, with a further projected fall to 36,638 by end 2015, down -31%. Such a rate of reduction is unparalleled in any part of Europe since 1948. These figures do not give a picture of the extremes to which voluntary and community organizations went in order to maintain services. These include pay cuts, short-term working, paying for one's own working expenses (e.g. travel), increased hours without pay, additional time committed to fund-raising. Contrary to assurances by government that it would protect front-line services, these have been closed or reduced.¹⁰⁰ Barnardos, for example, initially closed all services for a week in 2012 but by the following year had begun to close projects, such as the pioneering Child Contact Centre run with One Family. These reductions took place at a time when, as illustrated in chapter 4: *Emerging social need*, voluntary organizations came under extreme pressure from their clients. The first time this was recognized came in December 2013 with €1m windfall funding: €770,000 to the Society of St Vincent de Paul, €130,000 to Protestant Aid and €100,000 to Crosscare.

Although the 'contract culture' of Northern Ireland has not been applied to the Republic, grants are increasingly applied on the principle that they should be for services only, while the standard template of HSE funding for voluntary organizations prohibits advocacy.¹⁰¹ There is only one funding line uniquely applied to support national voluntary organizations, one which may be traced back to the white paper *Supporting voluntary activity*. This funded 63 organizations over 2011-13. Not only did its funding fall - 41%, but it was required to absorb another funding scheme (national networks) and a series of organizations traditionally funded by the Department of

¹⁰⁰ ICTU: *Downsizing the voluntary and community sector*. Dublin, author, 2012; National Forum of Family Resource Centres: *Cuts in the work of the Family Resource Centres, 2008-2012, impact and consequences*. Dublin, author, 2012 (unpublished).

¹⁰¹ This author: *Are we paying for that?* Dublin, Advocacy Initiative, 2014.

Health. Allocations were compromised by evidence of ministerial intervention to ensure funding for his own constituency.¹⁰²

Ancillary sources of funding for voluntary and community organizations declined: dormant accounts, the lottery and Europe. Dormant accounts used to be a significant funder of voluntary and community organizations. Here, not only did funding fall from €16.4m to €5.456m, but allocations were transferred to the minister and from 2013 most were used to meet shortfalls in local authority budgets. Although lottery funds go directly into government departmental spending, the official position is that the lottery goes directly to 'good causes' and the perception may exist, albeit incorrectly, that this may be the case. The lottery surplus peaked in 2009 at €263m and has fallen back each year to €225m in 2012, down -14.5%. With the privatization of the lottery, the proportion going to 'good causes' will be reduced from 32% to 30.5% for the period 2014-2034.¹⁰³ Only two lottery funds go directly to voluntary and community organizations: one in the Department of Health (€3.286m, 2014), the other in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (€0.91m, 2014). A traditional source of funding was the poor box, €2m a year, but the government has since decided to transfer these funds to the government department responsible for justice.¹⁰⁴

European funding has ceased to be a significant source of support for voluntary and community organizations in Ireland. At European level, small individual funds were amalgamated into large programmes, a process called massification, with allocations determined by national governments. Structural funds are now distributed largely directly to government departments, their agencies, local government and rural development (LEADER). In the social policy field, only one European programme appears to be directly accessible, *Daphne*, the programme against violence against women and children. For the new programming period, three social programmes (Progress, EURES and microfinance) have been consolidated under the €919m European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI). The Progress element is divided between employment, 20%; social inclusion, 50% and working conditions, 10%. The most relevant is a commitment to between €10m and €14m annually for 'social policy experimentation' designed to scale up social innovation, but the degree to which the programme will be directly open to voluntary and community organizations is uncertain.

Europe also funds the Peace programme, which under Peace I (EU funding, €500m) and II (EU, €675m) was a substantial funder of voluntary and community organizations in the island, but its scope is now much diminished. The number of projects fell from 15,000 (Peace I) to 1,638 (Peace II) to 400 (Peace III). Under Peace III (EU, €225m), funding was routed into the local authorities, also likely to be the case in Peace IV in 2014 (EU, €150m). The proportion reaching voluntary organizations is not

¹⁰² OPEN, EAPN: *Reforming public administration - the national funding scheme for voluntary organizations - a case study*. Dublin, author, 2012.

¹⁰³ O'Halloran, Barry & Burke-Kennedy, Eoin: *Good causes to receive smaller share of lottery funds*. *Irish Times*, 5th April 2012.

¹⁰⁴ MacCormaic, Ruadhan: *Charities share €2m from court poor box*. *Irish Times*, 21st January 2014; Beesley, Arthur: *Court poor box system to be replaced*. *Irish Times*, 5th February 2014.

clear: unlike the previous programmes, where there were numerous Intermediate Funding bodies (IFBs) (nine in Peace I), Peace III had only one global grant and IFB (Community Relations Council/Pobal), underlining their diminished role.¹⁰⁵ Voluntary and community organizations account for only 4% of Interreg cross-border programme funding requests and less, 3%, of approvals. The principal recent addition to EU funding is the food programme under the Department of Social Protection, now used widely by voluntary and community groups.

The only new area of government funding since 2008 is the Area Based Childhood (ABC) programme on child poverty 2014-2016. This is an extension of four long-standing projects against child poverty run in Darndale (2), Tallaght and Ballymun managed by the Centre for Effective Services with Pobal. Atlantic Philanthropies proposed an extension to the programme (€14.85m) if co-funded by government (total almost €30m), this being eventually forthcoming, with nine sites added in later 2013.¹⁰⁶ This is the most significant government investment in projects against poverty in over 15 years. The government also funded the National Early Years Access Initiative, a €5.25m project of Atlantic Philanthropies and the Mount st Club with small funding from the departments of Children and Youth Affairs and Education and Skills with 11 projects designed to improve quality of outcomes in the early years.¹⁰⁷ Final report is due June 2014.¹⁰⁸ Although this funding is welcome, it is highly unlikely it would have been provided were it not for both pressure and co-funding from Atlantic Philanthropies.

To complete the government picture, some local authorities provide small grants (e.g. Dublin City Council for community development, social inclusion, children and young people, digital inclusion, integration, marginalized groups), as do some partnerships. A small number of local authorities have established community foundations (e.g. South Dublin, Tipperary South), but we do not have a composite picture of these funds.

¹⁰⁵ The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust commissioned analyses of the allocations of the Peace I and II programmes: extracting allocations therefrom proved to be extraordinarily difficult. Unfortunately no such analysis was commissioned for Peace III.

¹⁰⁶ Bray; Ballyfermot/Dublin 10; Clondalkin/Archways; Dublin Docklands; Finglas (Barnardos-led project); Grangegorman/NW Inner City; Knocknaheeny (Cork); Limerick (a number of proposers from Limerick will be asked to develop a joint proposal, facilitated by Limerick Children Services Committee); Louth (Drogheda & Dundalk); and Midlands (as part of Northside project).

¹⁰⁷ Ballyfermot, Canal Communities, The Glen/Mayfield, South Dublin, Docklands, Donegal, Fingal, Longford, Limerick, Dublin SW inner city and Tallaght.

¹⁰⁸ McKeown, Kieran & Haase, Trutz: *Summary of the baseline report on the interim evaluation of NEYAI and Síolta*. Dublin, Pobal, 2013; and *Presentation to Mount st Club Trust*, 3rd December 2012.

Foundations

The foundation sector has been dominated in recent years by Atlantic Philanthropies and the One Foundation, both of whom will exit by 2017, which will reduce its annual value from about €60m to less than €13m. The number of organizations that they supported were quite small, but they were high-profile, professionalized, advocacy organizations across a range of critical sectors. A third exit is the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT), which decided to close its Ireland programme in 2013 (€655,000 in 2012). JRCT began a programme of work in Ireland in 1994, combining strategic, long-term grants with small, once-off grants for organizations concerned with citizenship, accountability, the misuse of power, rights, new ideas, democratic dialogue and the socially excluded. An underlying assumption was that these grants would lift the hitherto critically low capacity of national voluntary organizations to engage with government, public administration, media and public opinion. Many of the organizations originally funded were subsequently adopted by Atlantic Philanthropies and One Foundation. JRCT concluded with a number of exit grants, the last of which will end 2016.¹⁰⁹

The exit of Atlantic, One and JRCT will leave a small trust sector with one large funder (Ireland Funds, €10m (2012), down from €15m in 2011) and a handful of small funders whose total value is about €3m. The Ireland Funds will move from being a small funder compared to Atlantic and One to being the largest, accounting for almost 80% of the market. For the rest, the number is small: a recent study of national social justice organizations found that apart from Atlantic and One and JRCT, the only other funders with a presence were Community Foundation, Ireland Funds, Mount Street Trust and SSGT, with two corporate funders (Vodafone, Electric Aid), six in all.¹¹⁰ A Philanthropy Ireland study of small grants identified only nine funders.¹¹¹ They run a total of 16 small grants programmes, providing 969 grants worth €3.14m annually (2012 figures).¹¹² Grants were in the €5,000 to €10,000 range, focussed on disadvantaged groups and communities, some geographically specific. Small grant funding declined from €4.1m in 2010 to €3.1m in 2012, - 25%. Pressure on small grants schemes was indicated by their oversubscription rate of 4:1 (or a rejection rate of 73%). Ireland has few local trusts, although a recent example is the Croke Park Fund.¹¹³

Table 5.2 lists the principal philanthropic trusts likely to be in operation after the exit of Atlantic, One and JRCT.

¹⁰⁹ E.g. €150,000 for Equality and Rights Alliance; Afri, €90,000, for cross-border work, both for 36 months.

¹¹⁰ Moriarty, Michael: *Role of philanthropy in funding social justice organizations during a time of state funding cuts*. MA thesis, Dublin City University, 2013.

¹¹¹ Magowan, James: *Small grants programmes in Ireland - a review of the current landscape and best practice*. Dublin, Philanthropy Ireland, 2013.

¹¹² Apart from SSGT, these are Coca Cola; Cork Street; Dublin Bus Community Spirit Awards; Electric Aid; Irish Youth Foundation; Mercy Solidarity Trust; Community Foundation; Ireland Funds.

¹¹³ School, education, services, facilities, heritage, environment within 1.5km e.g. Lourdes Day Care Centre, Salvation Army, Peter McVerry, amounts not known.

Table 5.2 Post-exit philanthropic trusts

| Funder | Details of area of funding |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ireland Funds | Peace and reconciliation; arts and culture; and education and community development, with focus areas on disadvantaged youth, access to education, culture and heritage, shared future in Northern Ireland, older people and investing in communities. Recent grants: urban deprivation, children's services, LGBT, youth clubs, environmental protection, north-south, suicide prevention, disability, homelessness, fuel poverty, integrated education, sports, conservation, men's sheds, migrants, education access and entrepreneurship. Small grants programme average €5,000; maximum €20,000. |
| Community Foundation | <i>Community Growers</i> : <10,000, gardens and allotments for unemployed <i>Women's Fund for Ireland</i> : Violence against women, leadership <i>Caring communities</i> : 2014: older people, migrants, Travellers, LGBT <i>Our Lady of Charity</i> : Women's work in addiction, prostitution, trafficking, violence, abuse. Occasional strategic impact grants. Total: €471,000 to 412 groups, average €1,143. |
| Irish Youth Foundation | Youth, children and afterschool. €89,000 to 35 projects (average €2,522). |
| Katharine Howard | Resuming grants programme 2014 for early intervention and prevention for under-3s (€280,000). 16 large and 40 small grants, with share-the-learning system. |
| Genio | 52 projects in 2013, €4.54m: dementia, mental health. |
| Loreto Foundation | Challenge injustice, multiculturalism, women and children, community development; up to €6,000, total not known. |

Other foundations active in the Republic, including those with a corporate base, include Cork Street Foundation; Mount Street Club; Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, Ashoka and JP Morgan (social entrepreneurs); CS Mott (US-based); Carnegie (UK-based); RDS Foundation (education & science); Edmund Rice, Glorney, Healy Trust and Basis.point. Some religious orders are also known to provide once-off, *ad hoc* donations, e.g. Sisters of Mercy. Finally, Voltage is a programme of Age and Opportunity, with €5,000 for intergenerational 'innovative, replicable and effective' community-based projects in the areas of education, the environment and the arts, but its duration is not known.

Corporate

Data on corporate donations have always been the most unsatisfactory of all the funding streams, for few corporate donors provide meaningful information about their giving. Corporate donations are reckoned to have fallen about -27% since 2008. The period saw the departure of banks from funding, notably AIB which had been a significant small grants funder (*Better Ireland* programme), although the Ulster Bank has continued its programme (Ulster Bank Community Impact Fund). Several new companies, though, have taken their place and those best known to support voluntary and community organizations are Vodafone (€602,000, 28 projects, average €21,000); British Telecom (€21,000, 13 grants), Guinness Diageo (3 grants, €130,000 for social entrepreneurs), Matheson (mainly children). Others reported to be active are Coca Cola, Arthur Cox, McCann Fitzgerald, Arthur Guinness Foundation, JP McManus Foundation, Musgraves, Quinn Family Foundation,¹¹⁴ O'Brien Foundation,¹¹⁵ National Toll Roads (pro-active only), 02, GCC, Google, Patagonia, One 51, O'Sullivan and State Street Foundation. Three state companies run grant programmes: ESB Electric Aid (staff fund, €1m annually, suicide and homelessness, average €6,600), Bord Gais Eireann and Dublin Bus (€1,000, €2,000 and €5,000 toward children, sport, people with disabilities, older people, environment, education (alcohol, drugs, literacy, health).

Personal giving

Although some larger charities managed to sustain their position, almost all reported substantial falls in public donations from 2008.¹¹⁶ Overall, voluntary organizations in the Republic have experienced reduced income, ranging from 11% to 25%.¹¹⁷ Larger charities reported a decline over 2009-2011 in the range - 8% to - 14%, with a small number holding or even improving their position.¹¹⁸ Some of these figures are old and the percentage loss by now, 2014, is likely to be much higher. Donations to Crosscare, for example, fell from €650,000 to €450,000 (-30%), reflecting less disposable income and fewer numbers attending mass where its main collections were made.

Public donations appear to have been badly affected by revelations that some large charities were paying extravagant salaries and bonuses ('top-ups') to their chief executives. The issue first came to public attention in early 2012 but gained little attention then.¹¹⁹ Some charities initially refused to divulge salaries, despite a growing concern in both government and the Oireachtas that they were excessive. Although these organizations were outliers in the voluntary and community sector as a whole, the unrepentant attitude of two leading charities in drawing out the crisis over a period

¹¹⁴ Associated with Sen Feargal Quinn.

¹¹⁵ Associated with businessman Denis O'Brien.

¹¹⁶ Some examples are: Deegan, Gordon: *Chernobyl charity says donations down*. *Irish Times*, 13th February 2013.

¹¹⁷ The Wheel: *A portrait of Ireland's non-profit sector*. Dublin, author, 2012.

¹¹⁸ O'Brien, Carl: *Many charities all too dependent on state aid in an uncertain climate of shrinking resources*. *Irish Times*, 15th August 2013. This recorded losses of -8% in ISPCC; -9%, Hospice Foundation, -10%; Oxfam; -13% Barnardos; -14%, Amnesty; but gains for Simon, +5%; GOAL, +10%; Society of St Vincent de Paul, +20%.

¹¹⁹ O'Regan, Eilis: *Probe into top-ups for €150,000 charity chiefs*. *Independent.ie*, 30th March 2012.

of weeks ensured that the damage was widespread. 69% of those polled indicated that they were now less likely to give to charities, while Fundraising Ireland reported a drop in donations across the sector of -40%.¹²⁰

5.3 Northern Ireland

There are 4,836 voluntary and community organizations in Northern Ireland.¹²¹ Their total value is £742m. Larger organizations (e.g. Bryson, Praxis) have increasingly found themselves drawn into a role of providing social services by contract. Income from contracts rose from 31.6% in 2004 to 68% in 2011, while grant income fell from 92% to 32%.¹²² Some voluntary organizations have since lost contracts to commercial organizations who may undercut them on price and labour costs. In contrast to the Republic, funding for the voluntary sector rose from £259m in 2007 to £392m in 2011, up +50%. Unlike the Republic, voluntary organizations receive lottery funding directly, £26m a year. Employment is 27,773, 4% of the workforce, up on 2008 but down on 2005, with 53,000 volunteers.

£220m comes from public giving. Public donations rose in the years to 2010, but reflecting Northern Ireland's flat economic performance (chapter 1), 22% reduced or stopped giving in the following two years. Even though 71% of people continue to give, voluntary organizations expect that their situation will worsen in the short-term. Disaster relief is one of the five most favoured 'good causes' (11% of all donations), the main place of giving being in church (32%). The level of foundations in the UK is 20 times higher (1.44‰), the level of company giving is 12 times higher (1.2% of profits), the level of personal giving is higher (1% personal income) and the level of planned giving three times higher (36%), all reflecting the more mature state of development of the voluntary sector and its financial environment. As in the Republic, the level of corporate giving is low, most companies preferring to give to local charities. Shops, now numbering 300, have provided a cushion and have held up well in recent years, even though they have been challenged by clothes-for-cash operators and clothes sales moving on line.¹²³ Shop income in the UK as a whole was up 6.8% in 2012, with profits to 14.3%. In Northern Ireland, Oxfam has the largest number of shops (22), followed by War on Want (15), Cancer Research UK and the British Heart Foundation.

Figures for the funding provided by trusts and foundations are £3m to £5m (NI only) and £28.5m (beneficiaries of UK-wide trusts). Unlike in the Republic, the JRCT is continuing its programme there.¹²⁴ The leading indigenous funder is the Community

¹²⁰ Collins, Stephen: *Majority less likely to donate to charity since too-ups controversy, poll finds*. *Irish Times*, 16th December 2013; Siggins, Lorna: *'I think we are all being affected by the CRC publicity'*, says homeless charity boss. *Irish Times*, 23rd December 2013; Roche, Barry: *Fewer people are giving and that's evident since the CRC story broke*. *Irish Times*, 18th December 2013.

¹²¹ Bloomer, Stephen; Hughes, Ciaran & Thornbury, Andrea: *State of the sector VI*. Belfast, NICVA, 2012.

¹²² Pollak, Andy *et al*: *The potential for cross-border exchange and learning about change in the voluntary and community sector*. Belfast, Building Change Trust, 2013.

¹²³ Figures supplied by Charity Retail Association, www.charityretail.org.uk.

¹²⁴ Recent grants included Committee for the Administration of Justice (£67,000) and Relatives for Justice (£73,000).

Foundation Northern Ireland (CFNI) (£4.6m, 2013). As well as its own programmes, it manages the resources of other funds and donors and has constantly retuned its funding to emerging social need. CFNI runs a range of programmes concerned with community development, many linked to the conflict, such as *Social justice approach to community development*, *Conflict transformation*, *Communities in action* and *Communities in transition*, *YouthBank* (young people in community development) and *Space and place*, £15m to convert difficult spaces into inter-community hubs. With other funders, CFNI runs the *Prison to peace* programme and *Women and peace building* (Peace III), *Peace impact* programme (with the International Fund for Ireland, *Voices* (research, issues and advocacy, with Atlantic Philanthropies) and emergency payments to the destitute (undertaken with the Office Of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) and the Red Cross) and Esmée Fairburn (work with prisoners). Other important 'social' trusts in Northern Ireland are BBC *Children in need* and Bernard Van Leer, which has supported work with the Roma community. There is also a number of local trusts e.g. Acorn (Derry) and Fermanagh Trust.

5.4 Areas of particular interest

In the Republic, direct work with ex-offenders is funded by the Probation Services. Voluntary organizations negotiate funding from the service and there are no published criteria, call for projects, nor funding cycle. As table 5.1 showed, funding for probation services by voluntary organizations fell -35.5% since 2008, (€16.7m to €10.773m), in line with the general cuts for voluntary organizations. 62 organizations benefitted in 2012.¹²⁵ There is only one national organization concerned with prisoners, the Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT), which has not traditionally received government funding; and a network of ex-prisoner organizations (NEVA), but its current status is uncertain.¹²⁶ The leading organizations working with prisoners are Prisoners Aid through Community Effort (PACE), Extern, Coolmine Therapeutic Community, with many local services. Restorative justice is an emerging field.

The homeless field is dominated by a number of large providers (e.g. Focus Ireland, €19m), the Simon Communities and the Society of St Vincent de Paul, with a much larger social housing sector which addresses homelessness and other categories in social need such as people with disabilities (Respond!, Circle Housing, Sonas, Sophia, dePaul Trust, Cluid). There is a national body for social housing organizations (Irish Council for Social Housing), but none for the homeless. The deployment of resources to combat homeless has been substantial: in Dublin alone, even before the crisis, there were 57 organizations with 800 staff in 140 projects to address a flow of 2,500 people.¹²⁷ State funding for homeless services was €56m in 2009, but this has fallen to €45m in 2013, - 20%, a figure confirmed by voluntary organizations.¹²⁸ In addition, there is

¹²⁵ The annual report of the Probation Services does not list the individual amounts, which are generally obtainable only through parliamentary question.

¹²⁶ Its website appears to be not functioning.

¹²⁷ Mc Verry, Peter, SJ & Carroll, Eoin: *Homes, not hostels - rethinking homeless policy*. *Working Notes*, §56, November 2007.

¹²⁸ Crosbie, Judith: *Charities warn homeless will suffer if cuts continue*. *Irish Times*, 8th April 2013.

substantial HSE funding in the area of homelessness, which, like the rest of the health budget, has experienced a much smaller reduction since 2008. This fell from €36.1m in 2008 to €33m in 2013, -8.7%, but this funding includes statutory services.¹²⁹

Although national Traveller organizations remain, their staffs have been depleted and local organizations have been sharply reduced in number and scale.¹³⁰ National Traveller organizations lost -63.6% of their funding; of 40 original primary healthcare projects, a flagship programme, only 30 remain; while many local organizations are reported to have disappeared.

Minorities were identified as a group at social risk. Here, the main source is the co-funded European Integration Fund (EIF) and the European Refugee Fund (ERF), which in late 2013 approved 16 EIF and six ERF projects of €1,039,445 and €442,389 respectively. They are due to be replaced by the co-funded European Asylum and Migration Fund, which will provide €22.9m over 2014-2020. These fund re-integration projects by medium-size organizations, not core or advocacy funding and represent the only significant funding line available. Although the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI) used to provide funding for NGOs working directly with minorities, from 2008 this was re-directed toward sporting organizations, county councils, faith-based groups and others. The amount allocated fell from €4.9m in 2008 to €1.18m in 2013, when €35,000 was allocated to sports organizations, €194,760 to local authorities and €0.95m to others, a contrast to the level of investment in the enforcement régime (€78m).¹³¹

In Northern Ireland, the Probation Board provides funding for ten organizations in the order of £1.4m. The principal organizations working with offenders are NIACRO and Extern. There are six Traveller organizations in Northern Ireland, five being local and one strategic, An Munia Tober, which receives funding from a combination of statutory, lottery and philanthropic sources.¹³² The Bryson group provides services for minorities and the Roma community. Funding for homeless services is £36.1m, a figure broadly comparable to the Republic, most of which goes to temporary accommodation provision (£30.7m), £2.2m to the voluntary sector and £1.35m for projects. About 40 organizations are known to work with the homeless, with an umbrella body, the Council for the Homeless NI, but it does not appear to be well resourced. The best known organization working with the homeless are the Simon Community NI, Shelter NI and Women's Aid.

¹²⁹ Dail Eireann, *Debates*, 26th November 2013, 677.

¹³⁰ Irish Traveller Movement, National Traveller Women's Federation, Pavee Point. Under the scheme of funding for national voluntary organizations, 2011-2013, the Irish Traveller Movement received €100,000 and the National Traveller Women's Forum €40,000, since reduced annually due to budget cuts. Pavee Point receives some project funding.

¹³¹ In 2013, these were Business in the Community, Third Age Foundation, Show Racism the Red Card, Resettlement of Programme Refugees, Holocaust Education Trust, Partnership Citizen Support Services, United Nations High Commission for Refugees and Sport Against Racism.

¹³² An Munia Tober was the Belfast Traveller Education & Development Group with Belfast Travellers sites project. Others are support groups in Derry, Craigavon, Armagh, Omagh and in Tyrone, An Tearmann. Funding is from the Lottery, Peace programme, Dept. Health, Dept. Social Services and Public Safety, social services trust, Belfast Education & Library Board, Comic relief, Lloyds TSB, Belfast City Council.

In the field of minorities, there is a long-standing Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM), with 29 members and 16 staff. Unlike the Republic, there is a long-established funder, the Community Relations Council, working in the field of inter-community relationships, which has funding of £10m (2013), a combination of core grants, small grants, strategic support, media and publications grants as well as Peace funding.

5.5 Headlines

In the Republic,

- In the course of austerity, government funding for voluntary organizations has been reduced about -35%, contrasting with the fall of -7.1% in government funding overall. Community organizations have been more affected, health-related groups less. The government may complete its withdrawal of funding for community development this year;
- Ancillary lines of funding for voluntary and community organizations have either fallen or disappeared, such as dormant accounts or European;
- Personal giving has fallen along with personal incomes and are set to fall further after the events surrounding the CRC in 2013-14;
- Corporate giving is low by international standards. Although bank funding has been withdrawn, a small number of new funders has appeared;
- Foundation funding will fall over 80% in the next three years, with the exit of Atlantic Philanthropies, One Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. This will leave one large funder (Ireland Funds, €10m) and a handful of smaller ones, most operating small grant schemes like the St Stephen's Green Trust;
- There is a substantial number of organizations working with the homeless (€45m) funding; projects supported by the Probation Services (€10.7m); while funding for Travellers is depleted to a skeletal level. Apart from projects supported by two blocks of European funding, there is no funding line for organizations working with minorities and the new communities.

In Northern Ireland,

- Funding for voluntary and community organizations continued to rise to 2010, but may have dipped since then. The nature of funding is different from the Republic, with most provided on a contract-for-services basis rather than a grant;
- The philanthropic sector is larger, combining domestic and UK-wide trusts, with well-established expertise (Community Foundation for Northern Ireland). The corporate sector is, like the Republic, small;
- There are about 40 organizations working with the homeless; six with Travellers, but mainly locally; and two main ones in the area of ex-prisoners.

6 Considerations

This chapter looks at the current role of the trust in the Irish grant-making picture (6.1) and, drawing on the preceding information analysis, the considerations that should shape its next period of operations (6.2). There is then an examination of what is known about the effectiveness of small grant operations (6.3). It concludes with headlines (6.4).

6.1 Context: the trust now

The St Stephen's Green Trust was set up in Ireland in 1992 with the assistance of a grant from a Dutch foundation, since then facilitated by Porticus UK. From 2003, three religious orders have contributed funding: the Daughters of the Cross of Liege, the Discalced Carmelites and the Oblate Fathers. In the 21 years of operation of SSGT, it allocated almost €6.5m to over 850 organizations.¹³³ Grants were at a height of €790,000 in 2006, falling to €288,000 in 2012. 2013 grant programmes were:

- General grant scheme: ≈ €125,000 to organizations working with prisoners/ex-prisoners, Traveller men and people who are homeless for organizations with income of less than €500,000;
- Darndale Belcamp Oblate programme: €50,000, spending down with two final years of grants for 2014 - 2015. €48,355 was awarded to 11 organizations 2012;¹³⁴
- *Survivors of abuse* grant scheme: €100,000 in grants to five organizations in a 3 year programme 2011-2013, but this is no longer open;
- A special grant of €50,000 was made to one ex-prisoner organization for 2012-2013 for a focused strategy to support its development (Ucasadh).

The *Survivors of abuse* programme was developed following the *Report of the commission to inquire into child abuse* (2009), one which suggested acute social need among survivors. The trust commissioned research into their situation in Britain and Ireland, following which a specific grants programme was established.¹³⁵ An important feature of the Darndale programme is the use of the grant-writer to work with prospect projects in building up the capacity of small organizations to make quality applications. The trust also worked closely with other philanthropic organizations years to co-fund some grant applications or to liaise on applications to ensure individual organizations of mutual interest get the resources they need for particular projects from one or other foundation.

- Katharine Howard Foundation, Community Foundation of Ireland (3 grants).
- Dutch Foundation: ≈ €340,000
- Daughters of the Cross Fund ≈ €60,000.

¹³³ Its history was recently published in *St Stephen's Green Trust – the first 21 years – 1992-2013*. Newbridge, St Stephen's Green Trust, 2013.

¹³⁴ Burtenshaw, Rita & Bookle, Susan: *Evaluation of the Darndale Belcamp Oblate grant programme*. Dublin, Burtenshaw Kenny Associates, 2013.

¹³⁵ Higgins, Mary: *Developing a profile of survivors of abuse in Irish religious institutions*. Dublin, SSGT, 2010.

In December 2013, SSGT received welcome news that Porticus UK had decided to increase its annual financial support to the SSGT from €250,000 to €400,000 for 2014 and 2015.

The general grants scheme is the primary focus of this review. For 2013, grants were invited in the range €1,000 to €12,000 for core or project costs for organizations with resources less than €500,000. For 2012, grants were given totalling €132,800 for 22 organizations working with the homeless, male Travellers and prisoners/ex-prisoners and their families. Grant size ranged from €800 to €12,000, with an average ≈€6,000. They were geographically spread and included three in Northern Ireland. The general grant scheme has an oversubscription rate of 3.5. Grantees are encouraged to report back in a *Grant report* form on general results, sustainability and lessons learned. The trust operates publicly, with a published application cycle and annual report on grants given.

The trust is one of a number (table 5.2) of small philanthropic trusts that play an important role in assisting small to medium-size voluntary organizations with a distinct focus on frontline areas of social need of primary benefit to smaller voluntary organizations.

6.2 Broad considerations

The environment in which the trust now operates is a difficult one, dramatically different from the earlier 2006 review. There are three related aspects to this: the social situation, the position of voluntary and community organizations and the funding situation.

The social situation is one of extreme difficulty. Recapitulating chapter 2: *Economic and social context*, the country's economic situation has been exacerbated by the austerity policies followed by government, which have led to a growth of poverty, inequality and social distress. Chapter 4: *Emerging social need* reported on a resurgence of need among those historically at risk of poverty, as evidenced by the tide of those presenting for charitable support, such as for food, with the persistence of 'old poverties' such as fuel and the emergence of 'new poverties' arising from housing, household and utility debt.

The situation of voluntary and community organizations worsened dramatically, at several levels. Chapter 3: *Political and institutional context* reported on how institutions, champions and access routes for voluntary and community organizations were uprooted, while chapter 5: *Funding* showed how the state, while reducing its overall budget -7.1%, reduced funding for voluntary and community organizations in the order of -35%, moreover at a time of the withdrawal of a number of key corporate funders and the exit or impending exit of three foundation funders. Northern Ireland did not experience as dramatic a turn of events as the Republic, but continued to present significant social issues and a legacy of unresolved issues from the conflict.

This bleak background is compounded by the prospect of its continuation for some time. The conclusion of the *National recovery plan 2011-2014* envisages further cuts in 2015 and social spending to remain flat in 2016. The general election is likely to see a continuation of the policies set down in 2008. The mainstream national narrative, as promoted in the media, foresees 'an end to austerity', favourable economic prospects, a growth rate in 2014 of 2.7%, a decline in unemployment to 10% by 2016 and a reduced government deficit.¹³⁶ It does not predict the path of the nation's social well-being: although the government has published an outline of economic targets (*A strategy for growth*, 2013), a striking feature of government planning is the absence of any social planning or the setting down of the future pathways of social policy. Few have addressed the long-term consequences of debt for the nation's social development.¹³⁷ Those who have experienced social distress, with the voluntary and community organizations that work alongside them, live in a different narrative that is likely to be one of short, medium and long-term 'post-austerity austerity'.

This challenging situation has important consequences for the trust sector, especially if we look at its radically diminished capacity in the future. Discussion on the exit of both Atlantic Philanthropies and One Foundation has focussed on the funding hole created and the consequences for the funded organizations.¹³⁸ The point of discussion has been the dramatically reduced *volume* of funding, rather than the *purpose* to which it was put. At one level, the consequences for the St Stephen's Green Trust are, at first sight, not likely to be significant, for both Atlantic and One were large funders and did not run small grant programmes. The principal impact, largely missed by commentators, is that both provided core funding for leading national organizations with a strong emphasis on advocacy and systemic change, building up strong competences and skills in campaigning, media and navigating skills in dealing with the state. For a small trust, the withdrawal of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, which has not been reported in the media, is more relevant, for it provided smaller grants in similar but sometimes more politically controversial areas. Between them, there is a danger that the advocacy capacity of NGOs in key sectors (e.g. women, migrants, civil liberties) will fall back to its comparatively ineffectual level of the 1990s. Ireland already has the smallest level of advocacy in its voluntary sector in Europe, with only a handful of advocacy or campaigns officers.¹³⁹

The situation is likely to be difficult, but less acute in Northern Ireland, where there remains a challenging social and post-conflict environment coupled with reduced government funding. Atlantic has been a substantial funder of similar advocacy focussed voluntary organizations, but JRCT is continuing its funding there and there is a presence of a broad range of indigenous and UK-wide foundations.

¹³⁶ McGee, Harry *et al*: *End of austerity may be in sight, predicts ESRI*. *Irish Times*, 18th December 2013; Economic and Social Research Institute: *Quarterly economic review*. Dublin, author, December 2013.

¹³⁷ O'Toole, Fintan: *Children face predictable and nasty fallout from austerity*. *Irish Times*, 3rd December 2013.

¹³⁸ Crosbie, Judith: *Winding down of philanthropic businesses will create €50m funding vacuum*. *Irish Times*, 9th May 2013.

¹³⁹ 0.5% of staff and volunteers, compared to European average of 1.8% (Advocacy Initiative: *Funding dissent*. Dublin, author, 2013).

6.3 Small grant operations

There is a widespread view among funders, NGOs and independent experts, confirmed by studies dating to the 1990s, that small grants, if designed in a systematic way, perform an important role in assisting voluntary and community organizations.¹⁴⁰ Magowan (*op cit*) in his assessment listed the principal benefits as speed and simplicity of process, ability to reach grass roots, potential to scale up and leverage, although there were disadvantages such as spreading resources thinly. If designed carefully, they can even make a systemic, structural impact.

It is therefore imperative for small grant schemes to be especially effective. JRCT was conscious of this and continually reshaped its role to show ways out of social injustice; prompt structural and democratic change; and support and strengthen civil society organizations.¹⁴¹ Magowan (*op cit*) likewise argued for its role in acting as a force for change, reform, 'unpopular causes', solidarity and equality. Martin O'Brien, international programmes director for Atlantic Philanthropies, recently reflected on Atlantic's role and departure, arguing that the true function of a trust like Atlantic is to 'seek evidence from beyond the project it funds [so as to] to influence policy beyond the projects themselves' and thereby bring about systemic change for social justice.¹⁴² Operationalizing this is challenging. A general criticism of voluntary sector funding is that it is strong on meeting individual need but weak at addressing root causes and their analysis of homeless services funding in Dublin, Pheland Morris judged that only 5% addressed structural causes.¹⁴³

Making funding effective is the routine pre-occupation of funders, doubly so in the case of small grants. One especially useful guide looked at the impact of small and medium grant operations across Europe over ten years for the Roma community, doubly useful granted the trust's support for Travellers.¹⁴⁴ This set down some useful criteria for effective grant-giving, suggesting that funders should look favourably on projects that:

- Addressed root causes and dealt with the 'harder' social-political issues;
- Included a policy element, going beyond purely the provision of a service;
- Built links externally and institutionally (NGOs, public administration, policy);
- Were innovative in their approach, demonstrated fresh or critical thinking, ideas or approaches with the possibility of replication or scaling up by others;
- Include some reflection and learning on outcomes;
- Had some form of dissemination of the outcomes;
- Built the organization's leadership and capacity;
- Were of sufficient duration as to be impactful;
- Left some form of identifiable legacy, albeit small.

¹⁴⁰ Kiernan, Judith: *Review of small grants schemes*. Dublin, Combat Poverty Agency, 1994.

¹⁴¹ Pittam, Stephen: *The power of money*. *Alliance*, vol 18, §3, September 2013.

¹⁴² Holland, Kitty: *Atlantic Philanthropies \$1.1bn is 'drop in ocean' next to what state can invest*. *Irish Times*, 5th December 2013.

¹⁴³ Phelan, Elaine & Norris, Michelle: *Neo-corporatist governance of homeless services in Dublin - reconceptualization, incorporation and exclusion*. *Critical Social Policy*, vol 28, §1.

¹⁴⁴ Open Society Institute: *Making the most of EU funds - compendium of good practice projects for Roma*. Budapest, author, 2007.

Provision of a pre-grant facility was is of proven value in enabling candidate projects to elaborate proposals along these lines, normally taking the form of small technical assistance grants.¹⁴⁵ A suggested range might be €500 to €2,000. Another approach is for the funder to work closely with the candidate to 'improve' the application, an approach followed by the Combat Poverty Agency, but that would require the trust's staff time.

Whilst the full range of these elements may be ambitious for a small grants programme, examples of such approaches are already in evidence and three are given here. A leader at European level is the European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM), which expects funded groups to attack urgent or contentious issues, develop advocacy, make a policy impact and join a learning network. The *Caring communities* strand of the Community Foundation for Ireland requires participation in a learning network. The *Voices* programme in Northern Ireland (> 4.4) not only encouraged voluntary organizations, community groups and individuals to identify social need but also to put forward, in a series of standardized short briefings, their findings, proposals and solutions. In summary, the challenging social situation, combined with the difficult environment facing voluntary and communities and their funders requires their funders to be ever more rigorous in determining the effectiveness of their approaches.

6.4 Headlines

The headlines of chapter 6 are:

- The trust is one of a handful of trusts operating small grants programmes in the Republic;
- For the foreseeable future, it will work in a challenging environment of 'post-austerity austerity', with the persistence, possibly intensification of social stress and little prospect of political change;
- The exit of Atlantic, One and JRCT is important not just for their size but for the type of activity that they supported. There is a danger that the voluntary and community sector will revert a level of ineffectiveness comparable to the early 1990s;
- The social and conflict situation in Northern Ireland will remain challenging, but JRCT will continue its funding there and there is a broader presence of foundations;
- This new situation puts a premium on small trust funds maximizing their impact and value. Positively, we not only have examples from Europe but from closer to home as to how this may best be done.

¹⁴⁵ The original model was developed in Hungary, called the Project Generation Facility (PGF).

7 Ways forward

The purpose of this chapter is to come to conclusions and explore a way forward for the trust. This chapter, more than the others, draws on the views of the informants, who were asked to assess the value, impact and operations of the trust (7.1) and the key question of what should be its future funding priorities and approach (7.2). Recommendations are made (7.3), before concluding with headlines and final remarks (7.4).

7.1 Value, impact and means of operation

The general value of small grants programmes has already been affirmed (>6.3).

Informants were of the view that small grants programmes:

- Were, being demand-led, an accurate barometer of social need and better than pro-active programmes (e.g. Atlantic, One);
- If well designed, were good value-for-money and made 'a small amount of money go a long way'. Because of their small size, it was imperative such schemes have a clear framework, measure and evaluate their impact, reflect on their outcomes, bring the issues arising to government and be subject to an on-going process of interrogation and evaluation;
- Kept social capital in disadvantaged communities and their organizations at a time when it was being depleted;
- Work especially well in co-funded programmes with other like-minded funders; but
- Are typically weak in assessing their impacts.

In particular, they assessed the value, impact and operation of the trust as follows:

- The programmes were considered to be well led. The hands-on role of the Grants and Development Director in assisting and liaising with projects was especially welcome.
- External contributors felt that the trust stood out for being well-organized, thoughtful and effective. Even if one might argue about its target groups, it was focussed and ensured that its resources were not scattered too thinly;
- Prisoner projects were considered to be the main success story: projects in Waterford (Ucasadh) and Bedford Row were considered to be especially impactful. They were considered to be much more successful in attracting state or departmental interest, with the prospect of possible subsequent funding. The most valuable homeless project was the Mercy Law Centre.
- There was little sense of the impact of homeless projects, while projects with Travellers were considered to have been the most difficult.
- Investment in Darndale is considered to have been successful, especially through the use of a part-time grant writer, who has driven up standards. Projects had leveraged in educational funding from other sources. Several were familiar with its evaluation.
- The quality of information provided by some applicants was poor and they seemed to find it difficult to provide basic information (e.g. other sources of funding) - 'some were not at all sure of themselves or what they wanted in the first place'. On the

other hand, their very application may mean that the trust was reaching the right groups. This problem was most evident in Traveller applications.

- There was a general view that the trust had 'got it right' with the cycle of grant-making, application form, the size of grant and the occasional large grant. The combination, within the small grants programme, of smaller grants + some larger, core and multi-annual ones was a good one.
- There were positive comments about the trust investing funding for more than one year to organizations with a sense of strategic purpose, making medium to long-term impact more likely. More funding in 2014 should make it possible to increase these grants. It was important to 'stay with an intervention over time'.
- Quite a number of organizations had, as a result of funding when in a fragile state, subsequently stabilized and were now doing well.
- Compared to other funders, it set a standard for transparency, accountability and good practice.
- The trust was right to set a cap on the size of organization funded: the comparative benefit of giving a small grant to a large national organization was small.
- The concept of in-depth research on an issue, as carried out by Mary Higgins into survivors, was valuable and something that could be applied again to other areas of emerging social need.

7.2 Targets, focus and orientation

The current small grants programme focusses on three categories: prisoners and ex-prisoners, male Travellers and the homeless. The dimensions of current funding for these key target groups were explored in chapter 5. The continued appropriateness of these three groups was a lively talking point in the course of this review, both because of rising and falling levels of social need and the relative level of funding available. Data available show that the level of statutory funding for these three groups crosses a wide range: €45m for homeless services (with <€33m for health services for the homeless); €10m for probation services; with negligible funding for Traveller organizations (€140,000 identified). The views of informants on the existing target areas were as follows:

- Many questioned the continued focus on homelessness because of the large number of organizations operating in the field, although none disputed the persistence, even deepening, of the extent of homelessness. It was difficult to see how a small grants scheme could make a significant difference unless it were given to an extraordinary area of need, project or approach or subsets of homelessness (e.g. addiction, women fleeing domestic abuse). The only justification for continuing to fund this field was for radically new approaches or policy advocacy.
- The needs of both prisoners/ex-prisoners and male Travellers were considered to be acute as ever. They were unpopular causes and remained valid categories.
- It would be useful to balance grants in the areas of prisoners between in-prison, out-of-the-gate and restorative justice.

In examining areas of emerging social need (> Chapter 4: *Emerging social need*), informants were of the view that the following were candidates for consideration:

- New communities. This was the group that attracted the most attention from informants. There was uncertainty how best to assist the new communities, those aspects being most frequently mentioned being direct provision, trafficking (although some projects are already in operation here (Doras Luimni, Mercy order)), integration, challenging discrimination, race hate and random violence. Many were conscious of the crippling of the equality infrastructure.
- Acute areas of spatial distress, notably those that did not attract regeneration funding but which may be almost as disadvantaged. Several suggested that consideration be given to projects in areas of extreme spatial deprivation (urban and rural) so as to 'shine a light' on their situation and point to solutions;
- The new poor;
- A range of youth needs: young people at risk, e.g. self-harm, suicide, young people in trouble with the law, youth gangs, school failure.
- Other categories suggested were, LGBT, literacy and numeracy, carers' groups affected by cuts and isolated older people.
- One pointed out that there was almost no state funding for organizations concerned with environmental issues and this was a big gap in the grants picture, although this was probably outside the social remit of the trust.

To narrow this down, the most coherent set of views concerned the new communities and areas of spatial distress, which also opens the possibility of working with the Community Foundation of Ireland, where some of these categories are apparent. 'Youth needs' are, or should be, already have a dedicated funder (Irish Youth Foundation). The 'new poor', while undoubtedly an outcome of austerity policies, are ill-defined and would require substantially more research to define a funding programme. The rest represent a mixed bag, some of whom are catered for by the Community Foundation of Ireland. For these reasons, it may be best to focus on assessing the three existing target groups and add the two strongest candidate contenders. A matrix may be helpful (table 7.1):

Table 7.1: Assessment of target areas against criteria

| | Level of social need | Existing funding | Voluntary and community sector infrastructure |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Homeless | High and rising | €45m, additional funding for health services, social housing | Well developed but no national structure |
| Prisoners, ex-prisoners | High, with high prison numbers | Modest, €10m for probation services | Limited |
| Traveller esp. male Travellers | High, much worsened by austerity policies | Negligible, less than €140,000 identified | Organizationally mature, but small, unfunded |
| New communities | High in some areas, notably direct provision, minors, trafficking | None, except for EU refugee, integration projects | Emerging: some national, regional advice, advocacy organizations |
| Areas spatial distress | Persistent | Only in regeneration areas. CDP ended 2010, LCDP ending in present form 2014. | Depleted. CDPs gone, FRCs remain |

This analysis is strongly suggestive of:

- Maintaining prisoners and Travellers as target groups;
- Dropping the homeless category, *unless a proposal offers an unusual opportunity to address an aspect of the problem unfundable by existing instruments*;
- Adding one or two new categories, the strongest candidates being the new communities and areas of spatial distress.
- In both cases, such a category would have to be carefully designed around need. Social need is not universal in the new communities, but is focussed on a number of distinct groups (direct provision, those most at risk of exploitation). In areas of spatial distress, it would be important this focus on those areas where state funding is most absent and the community infrastructure most fragile. In the latter case, the trust can bring its experience of Darndale.

Interestingly, many of the comments of informants focussed less on the targets of the grants and more on their orientation. Several argued for changes:

- There should be a re-focus away from *target groups* toward *issues*: ‘if you can’t change the situation immediately, you can at least change the thinking’. The trust can be a stimulus for new thinking. Several were quite explicit about this: ‘funding should steer people toward new ideas and thinking - otherwise all you are doing is substituting for lost state funding’;
- In a related line of argumentation, quite a number favoured the use of grants for a stronger advocacy role, especially considering the ever more difficult situation in

which civil society now found itself: 'you can't get funding for advocacy or social policy work - yet it's the one thing that could make a difference' and 'most funders shy away from this';

- There should be a move away from grants for services and projects, whose capacity to change things was quite limited: 'some well-targeted, thoughtful research and publications can actually have more impact'. One suggestion, for example, was an examination of the consequences of the stigmatization of welfare recipients;
- The trust should invite projects that emphasized 'invention, innovation' and took risks. With a small size of grants, there was little to lose and there would be at least be fresh learning if results fell short of expectations;
- It was important to invest more in finding out *What works?* with the projects funded.
- There could be scope for the secretary and chairperson, checking with other trustees but without calling a formal meeting, to allocate some small urgent grants for organizations that found themselves in difficult situations (not necessarily a financial crisis, more likely a sudden issue affecting their community and requiring a quick response).
- Trusts had a responsibility to reflect their experiences of social need and the solutions thereto back to government; trusts have a high level of credibility with civil servants, who more than likely will welcome such an engagement.

Many were conscious of the exit of JRCT and although none said so explicitly some suggestions appeared to suggest that the trust should fill some of the gap presented by its disappearance and the fate of its exiles. An interesting feature of the proposal for a re-focus toward advocacy was that it crossed such a broad range of informants, not just those who might be more prominent for their political views. One cautioned, though, 'be realistic: you can't do much for systemic change on a small grant'.

Although there was a general view that the trust should have a better picture of the impact of its grants, there were a number of cautions as to how this could best be done. Several warned that expecting small organizations to do this would add an unreasonable burden and beyond their capacity: 'monitoring should be kept light and should not over-administrate'. Some applicants found it difficult enough to respond to requests for basic information, so it would be unreasonable to expect them to be especially analytical.

It is difficult to make recommendations for future funding in Northern Ireland. Funding for the homeless sector appears to be comparable to the Republic; funding for prisoner groups low; and funding for Travellers less evident. Northern Ireland has more trust opportunities than the Republic; an important funder in the form of the Community Relations Council; and will continue to benefit from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. While not wishing to undervalue the nature and persistence of social need, its scale and intensity appear to be much less severe than the Republic, with a higher level of public services, especially the National Health Service. The trust does not appear to be well known in Northern Ireland, though it would be relatively straightforward to communicate its role through well-established outlets (e.g. NICVA).

7.3 Recommendations

Bringing the earlier analysis together (including 6.3), it appears reasonable to recommend the following:

- The trust should maintain its basic approach to grant-giving, which is well regarded;
- For target groups, it should maintain the existing categories of prisoners/ex-prisoners and Travellers (with a focus on male Travellers);
- There is a strong argument to drop the homeless category, unless there are outstanding proposals for a new approach that would be otherwise unfundable;
- There is a strong case to add one or two new categories, the proposals being social need in the new communities and areas of persistent urban and rural spatial distress that are otherwise unfunded;
- There should be a re-orientation of grant focus to proposals that will address root causes, systemic change and advocacy. The type of groups funded probably will not change, but the manner in which the grant is *applied* may change. The trust should favour projects that:
 - Include a policy element;
 - Develop fresh thinking and analysis of issues;
 - Address 'harder', critical issues;
 - Build individual or organizational leadership;
 - Prompt invention and analysis;
 - Build institutional linkages;
 - Leave some form of legacy, however small.

Considering that these are small grants, it would be unrealistic to expect all these elements in each proposal, so they should be more considered as *desiderata*.

There should be changes in the operation of the grants scheme, as follows:

- To address the issue of poor-quality applications, there should be a pre-grant facility, which could take the form of a small grant for technical assistance (€500 to €2,000) or the provision of a grant-writer;
- Taking into account cautions about what is reasonable to expect from low-capacity organizations with small grants, it is important that the funder share the onus for the extraction of policy issues, learning and dissemination.
 - A learning community should be built around the programme, comprising periodic meetings of grantees to share the learning arising from their projects. This is done by a number of other funders (e.g. CFNI, Ireland Funds). This has a number of benefits - networking, sharing - but should not inadvertently privilege those who can come over those lacking the capacity to do so.
 - There should be a programme evaluation, with a dissemination programme, which will assess the individual and collective impact of the projects funded; *what works?* and the policy implications. This should also bring the social realities discovered and the policy issues arising back to government, social policy actors, the wider NGO community, policy-makers and the academic community.

7.4 Headlines

- Small grants schemes retain their importance as a valid and important form of grant-making;
- The overall approach of the St Stephen's Green trust was validated and considered well attuned to current circumstances;
- This chapter makes recommendations in three areas:
 - First, regarding target groups, it proposes homelessness be dropped as a target area, except in particular circumstances), with a continuation of the existing target groups of prisoners/ex-prisoners and Travellers (especially male Travellers).
 - There be a change in the focus of grants to favour proposals that address root causes, issues, ideas and advocacy;
 - There should be operational changes, with assistance to drive up the quality of proposals (pre-grant facility / grant-writer); the funder to contribute actively to the development of a learning community, programme evaluation, policy extraction, with a dissemination process.